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‘BIRDIE’ BOWERS
OF THE ANTARCTIC

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By the same Author

EDWARD WILSON OF THE ANTARCTIC
EDWARD WILSON : NATURE LOVER



Frontispiece

WILSON AND BOWERS

H G Pont

‘BIRDIE’ BOWERS OF THE ANTARCTIC

By
GEORGE SEAVER

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
APSLEY CHERRY-GARRARD

LONDON
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To
LADY MAXWELL

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“ BIRDIE ”

An Introduction

By APSLEY CHERRY-GARRARD

If this life be not a real fight, in which something is eternally gained for the universe by success, it is no better than a game of private theatricals from which one may withdraw at will. But it *feels* like a real fight—as if there were something really wild in the universe which we with all our idealities and faithfulnesses are needed to redeem.

WILLIAM JAMES (*Is Life Worth Living ?*).

BIRDIE BOWERS was one of the three tired bits of humanity who died in a tent on the Great Ice Barrier twenty-six years ago : and whose story does not die.

Since then ten million men have been killed in a war which settled nothing (the next will settle everything—and everybody) and you might have thought that the cumulative tragedy of it all would have swamped what they did. But there is something in this story which lives through unimaginable miseries and horrors ; partly as an example, as I believe : and partly as a help. And this is a time when decent sane men and women want help.

There is no doubt that Bowers was a remarkable man. Pattman, a fine seaman, who died amputating his own leg, said that Bowers was the most remarkable boy he had ever had : he was captain of the *Loch Torridon*, a four-masted barque, and one

of the fastest ships in the world, and Bowers was in turn apprentice, third and second mate on board her. Bowers would have amputated both his legs if necessary, and shocked me when he first suggested we might have to kill ourselves, as Oates did, on a sledge journey ; after all, he said, there is always a pick-axe.

He came from a happy home ; he was a man with a high ethical standard ; and he was exceptionally strong. Many men in the pursuit of their ideals or because their life lies that way suffer dangers and hardships ; not so many go out, as Bowers did, to seek them as though they were the objects of their most daring dreams. Quite early in his life Polar Exploration became one of these dreams, although he was much too humble a man to imagine that he himself would reach the South Pole : the high promise of his dreams come true.

He was chosen by Sir Clements Markham and joined as one of the officers of the ship which was to carry Scott's landing parties to the Antarctic Continent ; he was not himself to land. He stowed the *Terra Nova* in the West India Docks and after we had sailed taught us all our jobs, for no one else knew so much about a sailing ship ; and in a few weeks everybody wanted him. Characteristically he himself wrote : ' I should like to be in all three places at once—East, West, and Ship.'

He took to the Antarctic when we got there as a duck to water. That was because he was an elemental kind of person going to an elemental kind of place. So far as a human being can be simple Birdie was a perfectly simple man. ' There was not a twist in him anywhere,' said his sister who

knew him very well. And when he wrote that last letter which is given in this book, and which was written to his mother, his greatest friend and the only one with whom he discussed his religion, waiting in the tent to make an effort to get through to One Ton, which would almost certainly be in vain, he said, 'You will know that I have struggled to the end.' He signed that letter 'H. R. Bowers.'

It has been my happiness to see two of the most beautiful parts of the world. The one was England. In its domestic way pre-war England was perhaps the most beautiful thing the world has ever seen. It took at least fifteen hundred years of thought, and fighting and courage and love to make that beautiful thing ; it has taken about twenty years to ruin a very large part of it. One hundred years hence men will do anything to get it back to what it was : and they will not be able. The second is the Antarctic. In its grandeur, its vastness and, in a way, its purity the Antarctic is the most beautiful thing in the world. If you could live a month at Hut Point when the sun is going away for four months you would agree with me.

Into this beautiful land came Birdie—short, stocky, red and with a nose like Turner. Not at all a stage hero. Yet in his heart was something which never failed : and in his body a fire which to me at any rate (and to you I think) has not been put out by death. He had those essential guts ; he had such great reserves of strength, and gave them so generously, as when he gave me his eider-down lining at Cape Crozier ; he was so entirely dependable in an emergency ; and he was cheerful under terrible conditions. When he got into a more

than usually bad mess he used to pant : and his speech had a kind of breathless catch in it. That was the only way in which I knew he was worried. I have said that he was elemental. Perhaps this has something to do with his sense of direction and knowledge where he was. I have seen him pick up a depôt when someone else had got us six miles off our course : during the Winter Journey which was in the dark and sometimes in big ice pressure and crevasses his knowledge or instinct was uncanny. In daylight his sharp eyes could pick up some little mark in the snow which would put a party back on their tracks. Probably he saved the lives of the Polar Party for the time being when they got off their course coming out on to the Barrier from the Beardmore Glacier ; Scott tells how anxious they were and how Bowers was sure they were too near the land : in great doubt they acted on his advice, and he was right.

When you have been through as bad times with someone as I went through with Birdie you get to know him so very well that you do not seem to know anybody in civilization at all. As a result I have such a vivid admiration for him that when I have written about him I am afraid to appear extravagant. He is for one thing a living example to me that looks (in men at any rate) do not matter. He really was a curious person to look at : just as Captain Kettle is rather curious. When *they* first saw him in London they were very doubtful about him. They were quite wrong. For one thing I think he may have seemed to some people a bit pushing or even bumptious on first acquaintance. That was because he went so precipitately at what-

ever came along : and perhaps also because he had such a buoyant disposition. A strong natural cheerfulness can be trying. As soon as you knew him you saw that there was no bounce about him at all : it was all quite genuine and the worse things got the better Birdie became. This civilization is a funny business ; the shop window is very different from the shop. Birdie had very little in the shop window : the best people seldom have ; but the goods inside were pure gold. I am proud that the Factory which produced them was that of Men.

He was unusual in his point of view ; perhaps as his sister suggests he was trying to live in two worlds. Now he hated spiders but he loved cats, and when eight years old was found sleeping on the floor rather than disturb the cat which occupied the middle of his bed. Sometimes he stood beside his chair during a meal because the cat had got there first ; nobody thought it strange : nobody offered him another seat ; it seemed quite natural to them, and his mother, being fond of cats herself, took no notice. He never dreamed of abandoning anything when we went out on the sea-ice when it broke up during the night after the Dépôt Journey and was considered quixotic for not doing so. There was a quixotic strain in Birdie ; I hope there is in all of us.

It is probable that his judgment wanted calming down. He wanted desperately to make another attempt at the Emperor Penguin rookery at Cape Crozier before we tried to get home. On our way back he discussed quite seriously that the Polar Party ought not to come back down the Beardmore

Glacier but ought more usefully to go along the Plateau and down another glacier. Poor Birdie ! By the time he came down the Beardmore he knew it was all or more than they could do. Such mentality, counting little the cost, gets things done ; it gets the impossible done : like Columbus : or Lindberg : or Martin Luther : or the Wright brothers. It is no good decorating men like that : you might as well give a V.C. to a lighthouse.

He made Life look simple : perhaps it really is. After all, the people worth while are those who grow the food and cook it : who look after the house and the children : who run the ships and dig the coal : who help those in trouble or in pain. The rest of the world revolves round people like these, and much of it is parasitic upon them. Bowers saw what was worth while and did it with all his strength and all his will. I asked Bernard Shaw one day what was his definition of Genius ; he answered without a pause ' a true approximation of values.' Birdie's values were simple and I believe he was right. He was no genius, but he had a good brain : he wrote vivid letters and reports and produced good stuff for the *South Polar Times*. I should value his opinion on many questions of the moment, especially that most vital question of to-day : For what (unless attacked) would such a brave man fight ? when fighting under modern conditions may end everything for which he fights ?

He was a tiger for work and was the kind of sailor who can get a sight anywhere although the horizon is heaving mountainously and only one star can be seen racing through a sea of broken clouds. He

just went ahead, facing, almost welcoming, each difficulty as it came. The interest of this book is what such a man can do, especially if he gets, as Bowers did, or is pushed, as Lawrence was (by himself), into such conditions : and what can he not do if he is unselfish, upright and strong ? When we got back from the Winter Journey Scott wrote, ' I believe he is the hardest traveller that ever undertook a Polar Journey, as well as one of the most undaunted.' The standard is high. And he was more than this. He became a scientist who fitted himself into the work so quietly and efficiently that his value was not realized until the results came to be worked out. As an observer he was magnificent and there is no record in the world kept under such conditions as the meteorological log kept by Birdie on the Winter Journey. And his observations in the wind and drift at the Pole are wonderful. You must remember that these men had already been out for two and a half months, and had come eight hundred miles ; the altitude was nine to ten thousand feet. On eight days as they neared the Pole Bowers took daily observations for longitude, latitude and magnetic variation : on one day it was too cloudy. On the day before they reached the Pole he took observations at lunch, again immediately they camped at 7 p.m., again two hours later, again at 2 a.m. (January 18). He was so tired then that several errors in the working out of the sights had to be corrected. He took sights again at 7 a.m. By the calculation of all these observations they deduced they were three miles from the Pole : they marched this distance and at one o'clock sights were taken ' Lunch Camp.

18th Jan. (on Pole) "T" Watch.¹ The temperature was -21° Fahr. and the wind much of the time Force 5. He used a 4-inch theodolite. 'From this position ran down exact distance to Pole by Sledgometer and left British Flag' is in Bowers' handwriting on the South Pole observation.

Such is his record of accuracy and endurance at the South Pole. Worsley navigating Shackleton's little boat to South Georgia : Foster in one of the *Trevesa's* boats : Bligh getting his men 3,618 miles in an open boat after the mutiny in the *Bounty*, performed miracles of navigation and endurance. If you ever have a journey in an open boat pray for someone like these or like Birdie to get you through. If the politicians get you into another war (in order to keep the peace) and you are going about blinded and with your skin coming off, pray to God to let you die or for a man like Birdie to lead you out.

This is no place to give an account of the return from the Pole. If you have not read Scott's diary you should : it is a classic of humanity. But as things got worse and worse, you can read how Scott came to rely more and then more upon Birdie. 'Bowers is splendid, full of energy and bustle all the time,' he wrote, and 'Wilson and Bowers are my standby' (Jan. 24). 'Bowers got another rating sight to-night—it was wonderful how he managed to observe in such a horribly cold wind' (Jan. 25). 'I don't know what I should do

¹ See *Report on the Maps and Surveys, B.A.E. 1910-13*, by F. Debenham. Both the meteorological log and the polar observations are at the Scott Polar Research Institute at Cambridge.

if Wilson and Bowers weren't so determinedly cheerful over things' (March 4). 'Bowers takes first place in condition' (March 18). 'We are in a desperate state, feet frozen, etc. No fuel and a long way from food, but it would do your heart good to be in our tent, to hear our songs and the cheery conversation as to what we will do when we get to Hut Point.' And then that last heart-rending letter: 'I write when we are very near the end of our journey, and I am finishing it in the company of two gallant, noble gentlemen. One of these is your son. He had come to be one of my closest and soundest friends, and I appreciate his wonderful upright nature, his ability and energy. As the troubles have thickened his dauntless spirit ever shone brighter and he has remained cheerful, hopeful and indomitable to the end. . . .'

Perhaps everyone has their breaking point; but I do not know what Birdie's breaking point was, nor does anybody else. That was the glory of those men whom we found lying in that tent; they never broke. And Scott wrote, perfectly, what they had done.

These three—Scott, Wilson and Bowers—were the finest sledge-party which ever put on harness. Superficially they failed; I have heard discussions of their failure. The same men would have discussed the failure of Christ hanging upon the Cross: or of Joan of Arc burning at the stake. Except in this superficial sense, Scott himself never mentions the word failure; and I know, and you know, that by the more important standards of success and failure they never failed. I know from the letters I have had and the talks I have had

with ordinary working men and women, men facing big responsibilities, facing all kinds of risks, without great names—just doing their job.

They say—deeply moved—it is an inspiration. They write from the ends of the earth : from hospitals and operations and great trials—that the story of these men has helped. Birdie Bowers was much too humble a man to imagine that anything he could do could have much influence. But so it is : he has helped, and is helping, many.

Their story goes on. It is the same story essentially as that of many others who went through a bad time and did not fail : of man holding on when all hope was gone ; of man suffering—and dying—at this very moment. It is the spirit of men leading forlorn hopes ; of men surrounded and not surrendering ; of men digging in their toes and saying you can win if only you will go on, as Lloyd George did in the war (I helped take him over the first tanks : he looked as if he ought to be in bed and he was just beginning : a triumph of courage and cunning in a world where men have never been so cunning as they are now) ; of Mustafa Kemal saving the Dardanelles (if Birdie had been in authority there he wouldn't have had the chance) ; of that band of German soldiers ' two thousand miles from home, without hope, and without guides, in conditions mad enough to break the bravest nerves ' who ' held together, in firm rank, sheering through the wrack of Turk and Arab like armoured ships . . . ' ;¹ of Giordano Bruno who disappeared into the hands

¹ *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, p. 634.

of the Inquisition for six years and even then as he was taken to be burned said 'I have fought ; that is much—Victory is in the hands of fate.' It is a spirit without boundaries ; it is international and, let us hope, universal.

The world is full of the efforts of human beings to leave something behind them when they die. Kings, men of wealth, people of importance in the eyes of the world, cannot bear the thought that they will disappear and become as dust. You can get into parts of the world like Egypt which are just soaked with the hope that they may leave something behind. A man like Birdie Bowers had no ideas of his own importance, nor would you have looked at him as he walked down Piccadilly nor in your fashionable drawing-rooms. He would have wondered quite genuinely if you had told him that anyone was going to write an account of his life, and wondered still more if anybody would read it. Yet he and his companions have left something behind—in men's minds ; it is shadowy and intangible and perhaps a little fanciful, but it is something greater than all the pyramids in the world, and much more important. 'You will know that I have struggled to the end.'

APSLEY CHERRY-GARRARD.

Foreword

IT was Lieut. Bowers' practice, during his long absences at sea, to write home once a week : a practice which he maintained in the Antarctic. He thus, with but few gaps, provides practically the whole material necessary for the story of his life. The immense task of transcribing the bulk of these letters was undertaken by his sister, to whom it was a labour of love. In comparison with it the compiler's task of selecting and arranging extracts has been a light one, as it has been also most happy. Happy because without his sister's kind collaboration this record could never have been completed ; now that it has been, it is hers, and so are the best thanks of its compiler.

His thanks are also due to friends of Bowers who have helped in other ways that will be apparent in the text, and chiefly to Captain Sir David Wilson-Barker who has been so good as to read the book in proof, and to provide much material of additional interest.

And to Mr. Cherry-Garrard once again for a similar favour, for his Introduction, valuable advice, and generous permission to quote wholesale from *The Worst Journey in the World*.

G. S.

CHAPTER I

Parentage and Boyhood

Who hath desired the Sea?—the sight of salt water unbounded—

The heave and the halt and the hurl and the crash of the comber wind-hounded?

The sleek-barrelled swell before storm, grey, foamless, enormous, and growing—

Stark calm on the lap of the Line or the crazy-eyed hurricane blowing—

His Sea in no showing the same—his Sea and the same 'neath each showing :

His Sea as she slackens or thrills? . . .

Who hath desired the Sea?—the immense and contemptuous surges?

The shudder, the stumble, the swerve, as the star-stabbing bowsprit emerges?

The orderly clouds of the Trades, the ridged, roaring sapphire thereunder—

Unheralded cliff-haunting flaws and the headsail's low-volleying thunder—

His Sea in no wonder the same—his Sea and the same through each wonder :

His Sea as she rages and stills? . . .

KIPLING.

HENRY ROBERTSON BOWERS, only son of Captain Alexander Bowers, R.N.R., F.R.G.S., and Emily (*née* Webb) his wife, was born at Greenock on July 29, 1883.

Parentage and Boyhood

From his father he inherited a short stocky build, and a passion for seafaring and for exploration ; and though early death deprived him of the direct influence—even the memory—of one whom he would have greatly loved and admired, his father's career was in so many respects a foreshadowing of his own that a brief sketch of it must, on that account as well as for its own interest, be given.

Captain Bowers came himself of an old Scottish seafaring stock, whose family motto was taken from the fine Stoic maxim *Esse quam videri*.¹ At the age of thirteen he ran away to sea, and six years later was Captain of his own ship the *Geelong*, a tea-clipper, in eastern waters. In it he won a tea race, which was described in *The Times*, and later ran his ship to an inland port further up the Yangtse-kiang than any British ship had penetrated—a feat of seamanship which won him a name while yet in the early twenties. For the next few years he was closely associated with the first developments of British trading and shipping in China. Always in advance of his times he became the prime mover in the establishment of several docks which have since become large and flourishing centres of commerce, but their beginnings brought only loss to him.

A turn of his fortunes came, however, with public recognition of his ability and enterprise, when the Government of India appointed him to represent

¹ 'To be rather than to seem.' It derives from Plato, who made the metaphysical distinction between appearance and reality the basis of his ethic. It is peculiarly appropriate to the subject of this memoir whose character exemplifies the Stoic spirit at its best.

the interests of the mercantile community of Rangoon in the Bhamo Expedition of 1869 under Sir Edward Sladen. Its object was to open up British trade with the Shan States of Western Burma, believed to be unfriendly. This Expedition brought to the young Marine, after negotiating the difficult waters of the Irrawaddy, his sole adventure on land. In the face of many dangers afloat and ashore he carried out his mission with conspicuous success, and collected a mass of valuable information which he published in his *Report of the Bhamo Expedition*, very fully illustrated with his own maps and sketches—for he was a competent draughtsman.

On returning to the coast he turned to good account the experience he had gained, and for the next few years carried on an increasingly prosperous coastal trade from Rangoon to Singapore—pioneer work which was acknowledged, both at home and abroad, to have led more directly than any other to the subsequent development of trade with Burma. Such success attended it that he soon came home to Scotland for more steamers and for partners. Whilst doing so he took the opportunity to build for his widowed mother, to whom he was devoted, a large house at the extremity of the Esplanade at Greenock. On account of its apparent remoteness at the time it was known as ‘Bowers’ Folly’: since then, however, building has extended far beyond it. The site was chosen by him for the glorious views it commanded of the mountainous scenery of Dumbartonshire crowned by distant Ben Lomond, as well as the lovely expanse of the Clyde, a source of endless satisfaction to its owner with his keen interest in shipping. Here he kept open house,

for he was generous and hospitable almost to a fault.

On returning to the East he extended his trade to the numerous small ports of the Malay Archipelago and to Penang where his next venture was to found a Company to build a wharf. Whilst engaged upon it he met and married Mary Webb who had recently left Sidmouth in Devon, where she had been Headmistress of a school, to take up work in the Mission Schools of the Malay Peninsula. There were two daughters of the marriage, born in the Straits Settlements.

But such successes, falling to the lot of an independent merchantman, could not long pass unchallenged, and soon a large Shipping Company, after making him several overtures which he steadily refused to entertain, set up a determined opposition. This coincided with a depression in the tin-mining industry which affected the steamship trading very adversely and heavy losses were incurred. In consequence, relations became strained with the partners at home, who insisted on the vessels being brought home and sold. They only realized a third of their value and Captain Bowers was practically a ruined man. His ill-luck came all at once.

Government, however, subsidized him with the gift of another vessel, the S.S. *Mergui* (named after one of the Malay Islands), and with his wife and small family he returned to Greenock to superintend final arrangements before taking her out. To his sorrow, his mother died before their arrival in the house he had built for her. But here a son was born to him, and he had the joy of a few months'

peaceful family life, while his new boat was in building.

It happened that Henry's first winter was remarkable for heavy snow, an element in which his father revelled—all the more so perhaps as an antidote to his long experience of the tropics; and it is remembered as a pleasing trait both of his energy and playful humour that he must needs climb the Lyle Road every morning before breakfast and return with his pockets stuffed with snowballs, to pelt his family if still in bed.

Impatient to get back East in order to make good his losses he got aboard his new ship as soon as she was ready to float, early in 1884. The ebb-tide of his fortunes, however, had set in with a vengeance: he was caught in a cyclone in the Gulf of Manaar through which he battled for thirty-six hours without intermission, lashed to the wheel. He saved the ship, but never recovered from the strain imposed upon his heart. In spite of it he returned to the fray in the shipping trade along the Malay coast only to find his rivals, with their superior weight of capital, more relentless than ever in their opposition. They threatened to drive him off the coast, and placed one ship before him and another after him in the line of his route: a policy of attrition which proved only too successful. With enfeebled health and increasing heart-attacks he struggled on for three years against impossible odds, fighting a losing game but to the last refusing to give in, till he felt the end had come and cabled to his wife in the February of 1887. She made immediate arrangements for her passage and, leaving her little girls to the care of their father's

relations, took with her the boy not yet four years old.

On the voyage out the little boy being the only child on the ship was the pet of everybody, and especially of a very tall and thin Bishop. They would pace the deck in solemn parade, Henry's small upstretched fist just able to grasp his companion's downstretched fingers. Before church service in the saloon on Sunday his mother had taken the precaution of explaining to him that his friend would appear clad otherwise than usual, and that therefore he must behave himself and keep quite still and quiet. But to her consternation when the Bishop in full robes was about to begin the service, the expectant hush was broken by an excited treble at her side, 'Look, Mummy, Bissop's got on mosquito curtains!'

On arrival at Calcutta she learned that her husband had already died in the island of Mergui, after which his vessel had been named. His portrait bears the stamp of his strong character : intrepidity, keen intelligence, quick decision and hasty temper, independence of spirit, ambition, and tenacity—clearly a man who would brook no interference with his purposes and with whom no liberties could be taken. His son inherited many of these qualities, but they were in his case balanced by level-headedness, longer foresight, and a serene equanimity.

Captain Bowers left little money, but he left many friends. Even among his competitors in the race for trade were those whose respect for his personality was such that they felt an obligation towards his widow. They endeavoured to persuade her to make

a home in Rangoon ; but Mrs. Bowers, with something of her husband's independence, preferred to adopt the large family of one of his influential friends and take the children home for an English education together with her own. She was herself, in the truest sense the word can bear, motherly.

Mrs. Bowers found a home for her large family at Sidcup in Kent. Here, though Henry was the favourite both of his sisters and of his adopted playmates—necessarily perhaps as being the youngest—he never received more favours than they, for his mother discouraged any such partiality. It was her aim to foster in him even from childhood a sense of thoughtfulness for others and personal self-reliance ; she would make him, for instance, the custodian of the family purse on all their little expeditions, and in such ways encouraged him in definite habits of responsibility. Outwardly he was just a sturdy, jolly little boy, full of merriment and given to skylarking, manly and unselfish withal ; but inwardly there was a bond between himself and his mother which was stronger than filial affection : it was a spiritual affinity which grew with his growth. Its root was in simplicity and sincerity, steadfastness to an ideal, and directness of character.

Mrs. Bowers possessed deep religious feeling, a feeling which her husband had shared. She consistently set her family a standard of high principle and lived so close to it herself that her example made precept unnecessary. She won from them that instinctive obedience which comes of perfect confidence and trust, the devotion that is given to one who has a right judgment in all things. Never-

theless, she brought up her family in the old-fashioned evangelical way : the whole household assembled daily before breakfast for a Sankey and Moody hymn (which were then the vogue), Bible-reading, and prayers ; and her son took to this wholesome discipline in much the same matter-of-fact way in which he took to his meals, his games, and his lessons. Through the whole of his short life he never found cause to question the happy faith of his childhood : it was the background of his world and he grew up with it ; it was all bound up with his thoughts of his home and his mother ; and later experience of life served only to intensify it when he was of age to make it more intimately his own. To the last it was to his mother and her faith which was also his that he owed (as he gratefully confessed) everything.¹

Sidcup was still in those days a small quiet country town surrounded by fields and woods, and separated by a wide green belt from London's outer suburbs. It was in this pleasant countryside that Henry from his earliest years began the pursuit of his special hobby, namely the collection of butterflies and moths. He tackled this branch of entomology with the same enthusiasm and thorough-

¹ After attending a seamen's service in Calcutta in 1906 he wrote home :

'The Sankey hymns were really splendid. What good old memories of Sidcup they bring back to me ! I always thank God for those morning hymns we used to have together before breakfast. They are indelibly imprinted on my memory and whenever I hear them, think of the dear old family time again. That, with all its disadvantages, was a happy time for us.'

ness that he gave to every study that afterwards came, whether in the way of duty or of interest, within his ken. Sufficient evidence of this is not only an unusually fine collection of *lepidoptera*, British and foreign, but also many closely-written pages of scientific notes on them, with sketches.¹

But there was one creature which he could not endure to see, still less to touch ; an object which filled him not merely with aversion but with physical loathing, shrinking, and horror : this was a spider. His sisters remember how in infancy he would scream, and how even in his young manhood he would stiffen and turn pale, at the sight of one. It was in their opinion the one and only thing in heaven or earth that he feared. On joining a new ship he would carefully inspect his cabin for the least vestige of a cobweb, and if any revealed itself would make his servant scour the cabin and turn over the bedclothes in his bunk before he occupied it : when at home he would request the maid to

¹ Writing from the Irrawaddy in 1907 he says, in reference to a fellow-officer who shared his enthusiasm for the hobby :

‘ . . . You cannot think what a good chap he is really. He is great on Lepidoptera, so we can chatter each other out on moths and butterflies, which is a subject I am always a little soft on. . . . It is a thing that cannot be enjoyed spasmodically, it must be continuous and while you are at it it requires your whole and undivided attention. I believe I have got from it somehow a very decided “one thing at a time” trait in my character. This for a sailor is not good, in fact very bad. You require to do and think of a lot of things at once which is always a wrench for me, and when I have my mind set on a certain thing I feel that I am impatiently scamping anything that comes between me and my object. This is quite a serious drawback really.’

thrust her brush into the corner of every⁴ room in the same way—and would personally superintend these operations. In his own words in a letter home after one such encounter—‘It might seem to anyone a little thing to make a fuss about, but it means a good deal to me.’ Seeking for an explanation of this peculiar dread his mother found it when she recalled an incident before returning from India. She was giving him his bath, when a tarantula appeared creeping up the wall. She called to the coolie to come in and kill it. The coolie did so with his slipper, the unpleasant result of which indelibly imprinted itself on her baby’s memory.

His education started from the age of five in a private school in Sidcup. Geography seems to have interested him from the first, and especially the Polar regions—to judge at least from this curiously prophetic reminiscence. When seven years old, with great earnestness, if also with pardonable confusion as to the inhabitants of the respective poles of the earth, he wrote to a supposed Eskimo dwelling in Wilkes’ Land the following letter: ‘*Dear Eskimo, Please write and tell me about your land. I want to go there some day. Your friend Henry.*’ Thus early his imagination was captured by the polar wastes: the delight which he took in ice and snow amounted to a passion—at the mere mention of them his eyes would light up with pleasure, while the sight of snow would send his hands instinctively to touch and gather it.

In January 1896 he was sent to Streatham High School for Boys whose Principal (before he left) was John Stanley, D.Litt., F.R.G.S., and was entered for the Fifth. Here he made great friend-

ships, learnt how to handle a rifle and to write shorthand in addition to the usual routine, and thoroughly enjoyed life. Despite his short legs he won the Quarter-mile in the summer sports on two occasions, was in the Cricket eleven, where he seems to have been more useful in the field than at the wicket, and won the school prize for Euclid.

In reading his Reports one is struck by the recurring phrases, 'thoroughly conscientious,' 'keen interest,' 'good ability,' 'consistent hard work.' The note-book which he kept records the successes of his friends impartially with his own.

With the memory of the tragic issues that had attended her husband's nautical career and put an end to their short-lived marriage, his mother had always carefully avoided any mention of seafaring to her boy. The last thing she desired for him was that he should follow his father's profession. But it was bred in the marrow of his bones. One day before he went to school she found pinned above his bed the picture of a ship in full sail. From that time she knew past doubting that nothing she could do would prevent what she feared. So when a little later he confided to her his longing for the sea, she put her own misgivings out of mind and entered him as cadet on H.M.S. *Worcester*—which he duly joined on September 16, 1897.

CHAPTER II

H.M.S. ' Worcester '

Énorme, mon nez !

—Attendu qu'un grand nez est proprement l'indice
D'un homme affable, bon, courtois, spirituel,
Libéral, courageux, tel que je suis. . . .

ROSTAND (*Cyrano de Bergerac*).

IT was a harder school and a rougher training in those days than in these.

Then as now the manual work of scrubbing, swabbing, and generally cleaning round, formed part of the ordinary discipline of the ship, since a sailor—whatever his subsequent position may be—must thoroughly understand all the detail of the work he has to supervise. The Captain-Superintendent in Bowers' time had been in command four years and had already instituted many reforms, such as lighting, heating, and the laying on of water ; but economy of expenditure on the part of the management restricted these and other improvements in many ways. Conditions were still hard for boys in their teens, but that they were not prejudicial to health is shown by the fact that during the twenty-seven years of the Captain-Superintendent's command there was no death or serious accident among the cadets, who were exposed to many more risks and deprived of many more comforts than the

public schoolboy. A comparison between conditions then and now is best given in the words of the present Captain-Superintendent, Commander G. E. Steele, V.C., R.N., who writes :

Forty years ago it was the policy of the *Worcester* to harden boys for a sailing-ship life. To-day they are educated and trained for the scientific requirements of navigation in a modern liner.

Judged by present-day standards, conditions in the *Worcester* in Bowers' time were primitive. The decks were ill-lighted and badly warmed ; washing and bathing facilities were inadequate, and food was of the plainest. Captain Wilson Barker had made great improvements when he took over command, and water had been laid on, and electrical lighting installed. The Ship was also centrally heated, but the pipes were not kept very warm. The schoolwork was thorough in what it taught. Knowledge of sailing-ships, general seamanship and boat-work were very good.

It was unfortunately from the hands of their own fellow-tops that some of the younger boys suffered most. The feelings of a new cadet on joining (three years before Bowers) can be well imagined from the following :

I felt pretty lonely, forlorn, and a very small boy on arrival, and it did not help at all to have my ready cash and the dainties in my sea-chest taken away by a nice set of moustached bandits known as foretop men. Whether bullying is a good thing or not at big schools I will not go into, but my impressions are that during '94 and '96 at any rate there were some nasty specimens on board, and quite a few of the new hands had a bad time of it.¹

Young Bowers, however, seems to have escaped

¹ *History of the ' Worcester ' (F. H. Stafford), p. 192.*

some of these preliminary tribulations, and to have taken such hard knocks as came to him with a good grace and a stout heart, because he took to the life like a duck to water. Physically and constitutionally he was a pretty tough youngster besides, and could hold his own.

There was one discreditable 'rag' to which new cadets were subjected, but which he was happy to escape. It was known as 'St. Paul's Journeys,' and the victim was made to run the length of the lower deck and back, and then back to his hammock, under the hammocks of the other tops who belaboured him as he ran with boots, rope, knotted towels, or anything that came handy. The methods of the Captain-Superintendent in dealing with such malpractices were preventive rather than punitive; and in this case he had caused iron gratings to be erected on the lower deck at suitable intervals between hammocks, which put a stop to these runs without impeding free intercourse or ventilation. But in Bowers' time the runs were continued surreptitiously for a short space of deck beyond the grating: soon afterwards they would seem, to the credit of the ship, to have been abandoned altogether.

The human boy is not by nature considerate to the feelings of his fellow, whether mental or bodily, and if his fellow possesses any peculiarity of disposition or of feature the human boy can be depended upon to make the most of it. Young Bowers was happily not sensitive about his own feelings, and could welcome with hearty good humour a jest against himself. It was inevitable that his tubby figure, shock of reddish hair, but especially the extravagant prominence of his nose

which in size and shape resembled a beak, should earn him a nickname : it was found at once—the ‘ Gilly-loo-lah Bird.’ But this soon gave place to another, no less apt if less elaborate—‘ Kinky-boke ’ ; and it remained with him as an unalterable term of affection to the end of his time on the *Worcester*. He had himself unwittingly anticipated the name ‘ Birdie ’ by which he later came to be known in the South : from boyhood he would refer to himself impersonally as ‘ this bird.’ (He was quite impartial in the use of it, however : his sisters, or his intimate friends, were also ‘ birds ’ to him.) Undoubtedly his large and high-bridged nose, remarkably clear and strong eyes, combined with his rapidity of movement, gave him a curiously bird-like appearance.

His ‘ *Worcester Note-Book* ’ is a brief pencilled record which covers the period of his two years’ training, and is confined strictly to facts, especially to the personnel comprising the ship’s strength each term. Only here and there is a glimpse of personal interest disclosed, such as—

Was put to sling at no. 35 Mizen-Starboard.¹—Sang ‘ Hearts of Oak ’ at new cadets’ singing.—Had St. Paul’s forward of the grating—glad I was not forward.—In the Choir.—Nearly got licked (in Cowshed) at half-term about P. O’Hara’s Pom-pom affair.—Had St. Paul’s—lay low—did not have to run.—Another grating—forward—was put up during Easter holidays ’98.—Mother and May came on board.—Took the Theory Prize—*Story of our Planet*—and Scripture Prize—*Life of*

¹ Transferred the next term to no. 90 Fore-Top Port ; two terms later to no. 129 Fo’c’stle Starboard, and in his last term to no. 153.

John Davis (Summer term '98).—Pillow-fight—splendid fun—got one or two nasty ones.

His special chum on the *Worcester* was William Stephen Carruthers who joined in the Easter term of '98, and who after his first voyage in the Mercantile Marine sustained an injury which obliged him to abandon the sea and take up law.

The longest entry in Bowers' Note-Book (Christmas term '98) deals with a 'lark' engineered by the pair of them, which, though frustrated, appears as his earliest attempt at exploration.

Carruthers and I explored the Fore Peak, also the Tank-room. Climbed through a small hole in the bulk-head; got right aft under Mr. Golding's store-room. Hid a candle and matches down there, went often. Tried to enter Magazine—could not. Found two 28 lb. Shot, brought them out at end of term and put them in our chests. Made up our minds if possible to break into Magazine next term. I bring lantern, Carruthers brings tools.

In the holidays our matches must have been found, for the Captain ordered the door of the Tank-room always to be kept padlocked. Could not go through Engine-room or would have been caught. Had to give it up.

(But they would have found nothing whatever in the Magazine, even had they broached it!)

From the outset he took to the water as if it was his natural element, being allowed beyond the 'Deep Sea' Wharf in his first year. He rowed Bow—with a short oar—for the Starboard Crew in his last term, but never secured a place in the Ship's Crew against the *Conway*.

In spite of his short legs he could cover the ground, showing promise surprisingly enough as a sprinter

at the annual Sports, and winning prizes for the 100 yards ; and though not built for long-distance running he stuck the pace gamely in the cross-country runs.

Went in for Paper-chases—grand sport. Ran with Carruthers—couldn't keep up with him after a bit—kept running and got into an awful state. . . . Thought I should have dropped several times—was almost too giddy to stand when I stopped.

Unlike the popular (and largely fallacious) conception of the schoolboy perhaps, Bowers was genuinely interested in his studies, not only because of their practical value to him in the career of his choice, but also intrinsically for their own sake as gateways to knowledge. Naturally intelligent and wide-awake, he had also that power of application and attention to detail which is moral rather than mental in origin, and which is essential to success in any walk of life. Habits of accuracy had been taught him by his mother, and in the years of his training and after they stood him in good stead. As a cadet he was by no means 'exceptional,' and if his ability was above the average this was simply because he worked hard. Neither was he 'popular' in the accepted sense of the word, but everybody liked him. (His particular friends were deeply attached and lifelong.) The subjects that interested him most in his curriculum were astronomy, meteorology, and geography : in the two latter he came out second and third respectively in the final examination, and only just missed the Silver Medal with his Meteorological Essay. He was also runner-up in the Nautical examination, and carried off the prize for Conduct.

To qualify for the Merchant Service it is necessary on leaving the Training Ship to have obtained the Board of Trade Certificate. This Certificate is divided into two sections—School and Seamanship—and the candidate must pass in both. In each section there are three grades of Certificate—Ordinary, First Class, and First Class Extra. Bowers passed out of the *Worcester* on July 29, 1899, as Gun Cadet Captain with a First Class Extra in both sections. Had he been placed in the Navy class at the outset it is clear that with credentials equivalent to these on the naval side, it would have been possible for him to have been recommended for a place on the Admiralty's list and so to have entered the Royal Navy, which was his real heart's desire ; but he was robbed of it (as many another promising lad has been) by the convention that makes it impossible for a naval officer to live on his pay.

He was also third in the running for the Queen's Gold Medal. The Regulations governing the award of the Gold Medal are that ' the Commander, after conferring with the Headmaster, shall select not less than three nor more than five of the boys whom he considers to possess the qualities for which the prize is given. He shall then submit these names to the boys . . . who shall then and there vote for one of the boys so selected.'¹ The qualities for which the prize is given are defined as *those likely to make the finest sailor*, and they are worth quoting in this place since they sum up, as few words can, the essential qualities of Bowers' own character.

¹ *The Worcester* (Capt. W. A. Morgan), p. 48.

These consist of cheerful submission to superiors, self-respect and independence of character, kindness and protection to the weak, readiness to forgive offence, desire to conciliate the differences of others, and, above all, fearless devotion to duty and unflinching truthfulness.

The Captain-Superintendent of the *Worcester* in Bowers' time was Captain David Wilson-Barker, R.N.R., himself an 'O.W.' cadet, who had been appointed to the command in 1892, and retained it for twenty-seven years—the longest period on record; retiring in 1919 with a knighthood in recognition of his many public services. In his Commandant, Bowers had the advantage not only of training under a master of seamanship and a specialist in many of its technical branches, and one who (in the words of another 'O.W.,' a contemporary of Bowers) 'steadily raised the whole tone and standard of the Merchant Navy, both morally and intellectually, from its former level, and infused a spirit of a much finer temper into the cadets under his command,'—but also of the keen personal interest of a friend whose influence was behind nearly every position to which he was afterwards appointed. 'We had,' says Sir David, 'scientific interests in common': a graceful acknowledgment from a Past President of the Meteorological Society and a Member in Council of the Royal Geographical Society. But the Captain-Superintendent's interests were not confined to nautical affairs: he was also an enthusiast for Natural History on land as well as on sea, in which one of his special hobbies was butterflies and moths. An entry in Bowers' Note-Book during his last term has an interesting bearing on this.

Went out with Carruthers insect hunting—got Hummingbird Hawks, Green Hairstreak, Holly Blues, etc. Bred a large number of Oak Eggers, Lackeys.—Went out with Skipper treacling.—Went with Skipper to Mr. Farn's house to afternoon tea. He has the best collection of Lepidoptera I have ever seen.

Besides encouraging his interest in this hobby, Captain Wilson-Barker taught him photography and also how to skin and preserve the skins of birds. He taught him other things too. Some advice which he gave to another boy in Bowers' hearing—'Never make a mistake about money, unless it is against yourself'—was remembered by him long afterwards as 'a most necessary part of the code of a gentleman.'

Forty years later Sir David thus recalls his personal relationship with the most famous of his old cadets.

As a general rule I seldom particularly noticed a Cadet for fear it would be called favouritism, but when they left it was a different matter, and Bowers corresponded with me a great deal. I fully realized that he was not only a nice chap, but thoroughly interested in his profession, and I determined to do all I could to help him. He was the only Cadet who ever took a real interest in Natural History, which had always been my special hobby from my youngest days.

It was very curious how few boys had hobbies. I think that has much to do with home life. I always had hobbies, and my father encouraged them. So few fathers however are able—owing to business—to take much interest in their boys' amusements.

In my experience it is this type of boy who, by dint of steady application, makes a better success of his career in after life than the brilliant boy who appears to absorb knowledge rapidly and easily. Bowers was of this type, just an average boy with qualities that took him to the

steady quiet pursuit of his duty in and out of school work. Just the sort of boy who quietly stored his mind with knowledge and his body with strength, which at the right time and under incentive would bring out latent energies as happened in his call to the Antarctic, and called forth Captain Scott's remark in one of the last letters he wrote me—' *Bowers is doing excellently.*'

I afterwards caused the plaque at the foot of the mainmast to be erected to his memory. It was unveiled by my friend Sir Clements Markham, the 'Father' of both Scott's Expeditions to the Antarctic.

It was open to a successful cadet on leaving the *Worcester* to choose for serving his indentures for apprenticeship between steam and sail. Bowers chose the sterner apprenticeship of the two, and accompanied by another *Worcester* cadet and friend, Eric Graham, he joined the four-masted iron barque, *Loch Torridon*, bound on November 6, 1899, for Australia, and returning via the Horn.

The following letter from his chum Carruthers to the Captain-Superintendent, when the news of the Antarctic tragedy reached England, is the fittest epilogue to his career on the *Worcester* :

12.11.1913.

DEAR CAPTAIN WILSON-BARKER,

It is not likely that you will remember me. I was aboard the *Worcester* at the same time as Bowers. He and I were inseparable chums. For my own part I have never since met another such friend. Bowers left a term before I did. We were apprenticed in different lines, and did not meet again. We wrote to one another for a few years ; then I heard no more from him, and was subsequently told, upon what seemed to be good authority, that he had been drowned in the Indian Ocean. It was only last year that I discovered, quite by accident, what had really happened ; and since then had been looking forward to meeting him again.

This news from the *Terra Nova* is dreadful, and I am writing to ask if you could give me the present address of his people. They knew of our friendship, and I feel I should like to write to them.

It is of course inevitable that you should not know the boys under you in exactly the same way as they knew one another. As Bowers was under you, and must now take his place amongst the greatest of all 'Old Worcesters,' I should like to tell you a little about him as a chum.

Kinkey-Boke, as he was called, was the best-tempered boy in the world. When we first came aboard I remember several of the bigger boys used frequently to catch him and, as an amusement, scrub that enormous nose of his till it was nearly raw. He never got cross though, but just put up with it all like a little Spartan. After one of these onslaughts I remember his once saying to me very pitifully, 'Crow (my own nickname), it is rot, my nose is no bigger than yours, it's the shape that's wrong.'—You will remember yourself it was more like the Duke of Wellington's than anything before or since.

He was deeply religious, and was the strongest and best character I have ever known. It was his never-failing practice, during the whole time he was aboard the *Worcester*, to sit at one of the school desks on the main deck—before the whole ship's company—and read his Bible for a quarter of an hour every evening; during the time that we used to set apart for 'slewing-round.' I thought little enough of it then, but have realized since, the moral strength required for such a habit. At this date that one thing seems to reveal him more thoroughly than anything else I can think of.

Unlike one other *Worcester* boy his sense of honesty was stronger than his thoughtless love of food no matter how obtained. One afternoon we somehow got down into the bottom of the ship abaft the engine room, and worked and groped our way right aft till we got into a store room on a level with the river, and abaft the after gangway. There were lots of biscuits there but 'Kinkey' said it would be stealing, so they were left untouched. On the way back we had a great find. Two *Worcester* jerseys absorbed with alacrity two old cast-iron cannonballs, weighing perhaps 28 lbs. apiece, and about nine

inches in diameter. As we were coming up to the lower deck with our treasures bulging our jerseys to almost certain detection, we were stopped by the head Instructor (I forget his name—Jelly Belly we used to call him), who asked us where we had been, and rather than tell a lie, Kinkey would certainly have disgorged his cannon-ball, and let confession follow ; but I saved him. Whenever I think of that little prank nowadays, I as often smile at the subtle distinction there must have been in his very orderly and definite habit of mind, as to the wrongfulness of stealing biscuits when compared with what was to him apparently a perfectly legitimate appropriation of the cannon-balls.

I suppose there is small chance of there having been any mistake in the names of those who died ?

Yours sincerely

W. STEPHEN CARRUTHERS.

CHAPTER III

The 'Loch Torridon'

A wet sheet and a flowing sea—
A wind that follows fast,
And fills the white and rustling sail,
And bends the gallant mast.

CUNNINGHAM.

THE narrative of Bowers' four voyages on the *Loch Torridon* is told in his own words from the Log which he kept, and from letters home.

He had more in the way of news to tell of the first voyage than of the rest which, following the same route, had naturally less in them of novelty. On this voyage he found his manhood, and nailed his colours to the mast; thereafter he kept them flying, hopefully and consistently—the colours that display 'the qualities likely to make the finest sailor.'

The First Voyage

Dec. 7, 1899. DEAREST MOTHER,—We have now been a month at sea, and I must begin my letter to you, although there will be no chance of posting it until we reach Adelaide, about the end of January 1900, but I shall just go on and on when there is anything to write about, and make one letter of it.

After saying Good-bye to you at the station I felt

pretty miserable, but Louis met me at Fenchurch Street Station and accompanied me on board, which was decent of him seeing it was so late at night. Eric was on the ship before me and I was jolly glad to see him. We share a cabin together, it just holds 2 bunks and our chests (mine is our table), and the other 2 apprentices share another cabin likewise. The 2 cabins are a kind of hut, placed amidships and called the 'Half Deck.' The Captain and Officers have their cabins and dine aft, and of course the men are in the fo'c'sle 'farrard,' so we are exactly between them, and that's what we are in every way. Two of us are always on duty with the Acting Mate and learn navigation, when we are not working with the men, i.e. scrubbing, cleaning, painting, serving out water, etc., etc. We have to do anything and everything and the work never stops day or night. The other two apprentices are from Scotland, they are older and bigger than we are, but Eric and I soon found that our training on the *Worcester* gave us a tremendous pull over them in seamanship, in fact in every way. They were perhaps a bit jealous at first, but we get on very well now, and they are decent chaps and don't mind hard work. To go back, when the ship moved out of Dock on Monday morning, we sailed past the *Worcester* and dipped to her and wondered what we were in for. When we got past the North Foreland, a stiff gale got up against us in the Channel, and for the next *week* I was so horribly seasick, I won't say any more about it, it was awful, I had no idea it could be as bad as that, however I know all about it now and thank goodness I don't suppose I shall ever have it again.

Once clear of the Channel, the wind died down, and the weather soon got warmer and pleasanter, and I was able to take my bearings on the ship, and I know you will want to know what kind of a ship she is. Of course you saw her in the Dock that day, but one does not get much of an impression of a ship in a dock, crowded about with other shipping.

I wish you could see her fully rigged, running before the breeze, she must look splendid. Most of the sailing ships that pass us have 3 masts, but we have four, as you know, and are steel hulled, not wooden, which gives us

a great speed. This ship has a record for quick passages (you will be glad to hear that !) ; the Captain is awfully proud of beating everyone else, and Eric and I feel lucky to have struck such an up-to-date Windjammer.

I know you are just longing to hear what kind of a man the Captain is. You know of course that a Captain is always called 'The old man' although, of course, he is not old. Father would be called the 'old man' too, when he was Master of his own ship at 19 ! There is no chance for a man to be a Captain at 19 nowadays, and I shall be 20 before my 4 years' apprenticeship Indentures run out.

I think the Master of a Sailing ship can be even more despotic than a Captain in Steam, if he likes, for his word is absolute law, our 'old man' is very much feared by everyone, and I may say heartily disliked by most. He has a kind of steel grey eye, which seems to have the power of withering those that come up against him, also nothing escapes him. He is always quarrelling with the Mates, if they venture to disagree with him, and he is very stern with the crew. He does not take much notice of us and we don't seek to attract his notice when he is around ! All the same he is a splendid seaman (of the old school, of course), a man who knows every inch of his ship and one you can depend upon to give the right order under any circumstances. You will be thinking he is a bit of a tartar, and so he is, but I will say he is just on the whole, and it would be useless for a man to be 'soft' at sea, with these different nationalities which make up a crew, it would be fatal ; there is one thing sure, no one will ever get the upper hand of him.

After all these descriptions I will get on with the voyage. The Tropics, of course, were hot and sometimes almost windless, so that we seemed stuck though constantly working with the sails and trying to catch the faintest breeze, but the sea was phosphorescent with millions of tiny luminous jelly fish, and sometimes flying fish came aboard.

The most interesting thing for me was the sky at night, Navigation and Astronomy really go hand in hand and the midnight sky is marvellous, the stars seem to get bigger as you go South. I made charts from the first,

and when we crossed the Equator I saw the Southern Cross for the first time. You must often have seen it. There was an inexpressibly magnificent sunset one evening in the Tropics, and I felt glad to have seen it.

The ship's course takes us near the coast of Brazil and the Captain sent me up aloft to sight land. This going up aloft is one of the things you must learn young, otherwise you are no good at it and are apt to funk it (so the sailors say). Eric and I did it on the *Worcester*, but then the ship was stationary; it is a very different matter when you are swinging between Heaven and Earth with the ship rolling in a heavy sea. All the same it seems to come easy to me, so far, and I don't mind it, neither does Eric; he will do anything in a practical way, but hates mugging for exams., which we shall have to do to get our tickets when the time comes.

When we got rather near Pernambuco and the coast was plainly visible, several catamarans passed to windward. These carry 2 or 3 men, and are simply pieces of wood, with very large sails attached, and kept from overturning by pieces of wood, out from the sides. They go very fast and sail quite 20 miles from the land.

Christmas Day, 1899. My first Christmas Day at sea. I suppose I shall have many. It seemed strange not to be able to wish you a Merry Christmas. The only thing like home was a jolly good dinner with the Captain and Mates, but he soon got up and left us to it. Otherwise it was a day of hard work and dirty weather; we are getting far South now, and near the Island of Tristan da Cunha.

Dec. 28. We passed the Island without seeing it. Different kinds of birds are now coming about the ship. Up to now we have seen gulls and mutton birds (which are brownish), and Mother Carey's Chickens or Stormy Petrels, which are like swallows in their markings—very pretty—I saw my first Albatross to-day, they are immense birds, their wings can stretch over 7 feet across; we have Cape Hens, too, which are brownish grey in colour all over, and their wings are quite a fathom across.

The weather is getting damp and ugly looking, and we have been occupied all the time squaring yards, taking in sail, etc.

New Year's Day, 1900. This is the worst weather we have had so far, the ship has been rolling in a heavy sea, everything in the Half Deck has been swamped, our chests and clothes floating about, we are always being soaked, most unpleasant !

Jan. 17. Too busy to write much as it has been heavy weather, but we should be in Adelaide in about a fortnight's time, and it is better already. The stars are magnificent. I identified several planets, and saw Jupiter near Antares.

Everyone, from the Captain downwards, is now fishing for birds with line and bait ; an Albatross was caught to-day and dragged aboard flapping and screeching. He was soon dispatched with a belaying pin and then skinned. It sounds cruel, but there are hundreds of birds of different kinds, we have quite a collection already. Mollyhawks, Stinkers—both very large—Cape pigeons, which are very pretty, brown in colour with white blotches on the upper side of their wings and tail, their under side is white with a black rim. I have not caught anything yet, but have had some bites. I am not so lucky as the other three, who have each caught something, but I like skinning and preparing them for a collection.

Jan. 19. It has been an exciting day, the Captain caught 8 Albatrosses and gave me one. One of the sailors fixed it for me, and then I skinned it and shall bring it home together with the rest of my collection. I have had quite a lot given me ; we often keep only the head (which will be stuffed) or wings of these great birds, and we exchange different parts, such as a head for a leg so as to get the best specimens for our collections.

Jan. 29. We are close to Kangaroo Island in the Gulf of St. Vincent, and expect to anchor to-morrow off the Semaphore (the watering place of Adelaide). Our gun-powder will be unloaded first, and then we shall get ashore. This must be posted, so I will stop. I hope there will be letters for me, 3 months is a long time without news.

March 7, 1900. We had a busy time in Adelaide, discharging and painting, cleaning and overhauling the ship generally, before taking in new cargo. The first thing Eric and I wanted on arrival, was a swim, it was

so hot, so we just went over the side, in the river. We did that every evening for over a week, and then someone said he had seen a shark. We did not want to believe him, but the next day 3 large sharks came about the ship so we did not bathe again.

We saw a good deal of Adelaide, and made some excursions in the country. We took the train to Mount Lofty, and the scenery on the hills is beautiful. I managed to catch some butterflies, and chased others. The fruit is very abundant. Eric and I asked a man who had an orchard to give us 1/- worth. He didn't say anything, and we waited for some time. When he returned, with another man, they were carrying a *clothes-basket* full of fruit! We had to eat as much as we could and leave the rest. The *Torrens* a 3-masted wooden barque that had started before us, came in with Goble and Stone (*Worcester*) aboard, and also the *Aunaurus* with Wylie—'Hullo! Kinky!' they said. We had a lot to yarn about, of course, and it was fine seeing them again; one is likely to run up against Old Worcesters in any part of the world. Will you credit it? In the six months since we have seen each other *they had forgotten my name*, but of course not my *Worcester* nickname 'Kinky Boke'!

We are to go on to Melbourne to-morrow and I will write again from there. It will take us about a week I expect to get there. I must say I am feeling rather glad to see a bit more of Australia than we expected when we left London. We shall be full up after that, and then Homeward Bound.

April, 1900. We have had a fine time in Melbourne and enjoyed it much better than Adelaide for reasons you will see later on.

Melbourne itself is a splendid city, with very good suburbs. All the streets are at right angles, and there are fine buildings and shops.

At first we had a lot of trouble, in most of the crew deserting, which gave us extra work. It takes all the men aboard a ship to run a ship, whether she is at sea, or just taking in cargo, and a sailing ship only takes the minimum of a crew to run her for economy's sake. When I think of all the men on board the ships in the

Navy, or even a large steamer, gosh ! I wonder what they all find to do ? No doubt I shall find out, when I leave this old tank, 3 years and a half hence now, mark you, not four. Anyhow, we all work hard enough I know, and after being in that blazing hot hold all day, tallying cargo, and watching that nothing (brandy especially) is stolen, the only thing one wants is a long swim. We had to give that up in Adelaide though, as I think I told you, and I won't take any risks for your sake, though I think swimming is the finest thing to do, and I feel the water is really my element.

After we had been in Melbourne for a few days the Captain told us 4 apprentices that he was going to take us to see some of his friends. I think you will be rather surprised after what I told you in my letter about the kind of man he is. *But not half so surprised as we have been since reaching Australia.* It's all very strange to us, but the Captain is a totally different man on shore from what he is at sea. He has so many *dear friends* on shore and not *one* at sea ! They come down in batches to see the ship and drink whisky with him in the cabin. I say *with him*, but I don't believe he touches it himself, he is always strictly sober.

We all went with him to the house of these people who live in one of the suburbs of Melbourne (Kew), and we did have a ripping time. They made us at home from the first and could not have been nicer. The family consisted of father and mother and three daughters just about our ages, a young son, and a girl friend of the daughters, who was staying with them. We were just right for numbers and the girls were awfully nice and very pretty. The mother is a real mother, and just wanted us to enjoy ourselves, which we did, as you may imagine. We played tennis in their garden, and stayed to supper. When we left we felt we had known them quite a long time and we are invited to come as often as we can, spend Sundays, etc. I think you will agree that we have struck the true Colonial hospitality.

Later. We have been several times to our friends at Kew and our friendship has grown stronger every time. It is worth more than I can say to spend some hours in a real home with such nice people after being at sea.

April 16. We are due to sail to-morrow. We have been down to Kew to say Good-bye, and they made us stay to supper, and as late as we could. They gave us a pot of jam each, and the girls are sending down a large tin of cakes to the ship, which they have baked themselves. We all hope to meet again, next time we touch Australia. I think the girls are too young to be married before we see them again, which we should in about a year's time, and their mother is jolly sensible anyway.

Now I shall begin to count the days until I see you again. I have some of my birds' heads mounted, they will look well upon the walls, and wait till you see my Albatross, it is lovely, I am sure you will like it, its wings are *more* than 6 feet across.

(Leaves from a Log)

April 25. We are running southward of New Zealand. It is very cold, with heavy squalls of hail and sleet, everything is damp and most miserable. All hands frequently take in sail.

April 27. A high sea and we are shipping water tremendously, the Half Deck was flooded and I was up to my waist in water.

May 8. Weather much improved, managed to get our clothes dry again, which is a great comfort. There are lots of birds following us, but we have been too occupied with the ship to fish for them.

May 19. I saw Cape Crows for the first time. They are slate colour with white silvery patches on their wings, which terminate in a brown tip. Their bodies are white underneath.

May 26. We are round the Horn and have passed within a mile of an outward-bound ship, under topsails, she exhibited a flare. It was the first sail we had seen for weeks and a welcome sight; it was nice to think that *we* were homeward bound!

June 4. We are getting on now, and have passed the Falkland Islands. It was bitterly cold there. We have passed several more outward-bound barques, one with 4 masts. A very large black Albatross followed us for some time astern.

June 12. Nearing the Tropics. The stars are very brilliant. On my early Watch at 4 a.m. I saw Zodiacal light 30° high. On June 10 the Southern Cross set and the next day at 5 a.m. I saw the Sun, Moon and Jupiter at one time, which was rather remarkable.

June 20. Crossed the Equator, the weather is hot and oppressive. We are very busy painting the ship and she needs it badly after so much dirty weather. It takes a lot to satisfy the Skipper, who knows all about paint, and often does a bit himself to show us how it ought to be done !

There appear to be 2 kinds of Mutton birds, one grey and the other brown. The brown ones have more angular wings and stronger flight.

It is so hot I am sleeping on deck and when off one can only lie on the deck and read. I have just finished a very interesting book called *Christendom Astray*. It throws a light on many religious problems and gives you a lot to think about.

One of the sailors became hysterical and we doused him with water till he came to ; *we* enjoyed it, but I don't suppose he did ; anyhow you've got to stop a man going on like that.

July 10. Still in the Tropics and so often becalmed we hardly seem to make progress. The decks are so hot, that when I drew my feet up I tore a quantity of dead wood off the surface which stuck to my feet.

July 29. Nearing home. Lizard Head, abreast of Eddystone Lighthouse, which gives out a bright white flash.

July 30. Lights of Brighton now in sight.

July 31. Packed my chest, passed the *Worcester*.

Aug. 1. Went Home.

CHAPTER IV

The 'Loch Torridon' (continued)

And as soon as he was in the ship, there he felt the most sweetness that ever he felt ; and he was fulfilled of all thing that he thought on or desired. Then said he, ' Fair Christ, I wot not in what joy I am, for this joy passeth all earthly joys that ever I was in.' And so in this joy he laid him down to the ship's board, and slept till day.

SIR THOMAS MALLORY.

HE returned from the voyage considerably toughened by the experience, but in no sense roughened. Outwardly he presented a weathered and hardy appearance for a lad of his years, that could stand any amount of buffeting ; but inwardly he was still the soul of gentleness.

If he had been in some respects unfortunate in his Commander, a sea-dog of the old tyrannical type, stern and relentless to weakness or inefficiency, he had at any rate had the advantage of serving under a first-rate seaman of iron nerve who secured the instantaneous obedience, and commanded the wholesome respect of his subordinates, a respect won not at all from affection but from fear.

Second Voyage

Nov. 1st, 1900. We have been nearly a month at sea, and there has been little to write about, but to-day was

the anniversary of our signing our Indentures and joining the Ship. The Captain called us into the cabin, congratulated us, shook hands all round, and invited us to supper, which made a pleasant change certainly.

When I think of this past year, and what I was a year ago, I could smile at the difference. I was a boy then, and now I am a man, not only in my work (for I may say I can do a day's work with anyone), but also in my thoughts.

Coming back home, after the first voyage, I realized what a lot it meant to me to have you all to look forward to, some chaps haven't got a real home, and I can't imagine anything more rotten. I know, too, that life has been full of difficulties for you, but the day is coming when I am going to make up everything to you, you can depend upon that, dearest, you will yet be jolly glad you have had a son, although he has cost you a lot!

I think about all these things, especially when I am alone on a watch at night, and things come nearer to one.

It is wonderful being at sea on a calm, starry night, picking out all the constellations and stars that one knows, and getting to know new ones. I am allowed to take the wheel now, and steered her till dawn, by Canopus last night.

Christmas Day, 1900. We are south of Australia. The passage has been pretty rough all the time since passing the meridian. Once there was such a big sea over in the main rigging that the Skipper and whole watch were knocked over, and under water. It is surprising how little the sailors grumble about being constantly soaked, they take it as a matter of course; but what they do grouse at is the food, which is monotonous, and of course there are rows. We have rows, too, with the steward very often, if he tries to do us out of our proper 'whack.'

Being Christmas Day we celebrated it in the usual way, although it does seem queer to be doing so at midsummer instead of midwinter. We gave a concert in the Half Deck.

January 1st, 1901. We have arrived in Adelaide. Lying some distance out at sea last night, I saw Venus, very large, practically on the horizon. Later on it was

reported as a *light*, as we were on the outlook for land. I must give this to the Pilot to post.

Later. Had a lot of trouble with the crew and several cleared. The Starboard Watch was fined for refusing to paint over the side before we got into Adelaide. It is extremely hot, and we are hard at work all day. But we are going on to Melbourne so that's alright!

Melbourne. *Feb. 15th-March 19th.* We have had a splendid time here. As soon as we arrived we met a lot of Old Worcesters who came aboard, and we arranged to go to the Zoo, etc., together.

It was nice to see le Doux (who is aboard the *Inversnaid*) and we went to the Cathedral and other places. Of course we lost no time in going to see our friends at Kew (all 4 of us went up the first evening).

They were delighted to see us, and were just as nice as ever. It is difficult to express how kind they were, and we had a splendid time, playing tennis and dancing. They gave a dance again in their ball-room, it was topping.

We have met so many people there, as their house seems to be always full somehow. Australians are very jolly and friendly, I think. Eric makes the most of his time, he's so good-looking, and that weighs a lot with girls. Still one never knows. . . . We are due to sail and they all came down to see us off from the paddle steamer. They sent their young brother down last night with 11 pots of jam, a tin of cakes and 5 cucumbers for us, jolly decent of them. We waved until they were out of sight.

Melbourne to London. *March 19-June 16, 1901.* Nothing very remarkable. Ran into stormy weather soon after leaving Melbourne. The Half Deck was flooded to nearly 1 ft. water, everything, chests, boots and shoes, clothes, etc., all floating about, and I was wet every watch for some days.

A mollyhawk, 7 ft. 6 in. across the wings, was caught, and also a stinker, 7 ft. 2 in.

The Ship arrived in London on June 16th.

Since going to sea, with no opportunity of collecting butterflies and moths, Bowers had transferred

his attention to oceanic birds, and had made a collection of specimen heads of any that were captured. His infectious enthusiasm for this hobby had communicated itself to some of the crew, and it was somewhat of a painful surprise to find on returning home that this enthusiasm was not shared by his family, when he disclosed to their horrified gaze a large case full of these grisly trophies. Many of them were already somewhat high and were consigned forthwith to the incinerator.

He was just in time for the *Worcester* Sports and went down to Ingress Abbey, where he found a more appreciative recipient of his birds' heads in his old chief Captain Wilson-Barker, who invited him to dinner. He was just in time too to hear at first hand of preparations for a voyage of national importance, which thrilled him exceedingly. For among the other visitors were two 'Old Worcesters' to whom the Captain introduced him: Lieut. A. B. Armitage, R.N.R., recently appointed Pilot to the *Discovery* about to sail for the Antarctic under Captain Scott; and Lieut. E. R. G. Evans, R.N., subsequently appointed to the relief ship the *Morning*, and a future shipmate on the *Terra Nova*. 'We talked Polar work all the evening,' and he took with him the memory of that discussion on his third voyage round the Horn.

But meanwhile an unlucky accident nearly robbed him of the prospect. He was skylarking with a friend on the roof of his house, and had climbed through the skylight, shut it, and thrust his face to the glass through which he peered at his startled friend. The friend's look of astonishment was too much for Bowers, who collapsed in laugh-

ter ; the skylight window was loose on its hinges and came away in his hands, so that he slid off the roof. He took the drop of two stories on to the coal-shed roof which broke his fall. Having the presence of mind to use his arms he took the jolt hands first, and came off with no bones broken, but severely bruised and with nearly dislocated shoulders. He made light of his injuries at the time, but later confessed that 'for some weeks I could hardly move my arms, they were almost rigid and felt as though they had been jerked into my body. But with massage the power gradually came back, to my intense relief.' Luckily the ship did not sail till the beginning of October and the accident seemed to matter little to him in comparison with the fact that on September 7, the Captain had made him 3rd Mate. He was still somewhat crippled, however, even when the boat sailed and felt unwell for some time afterwards, but managed to go about his duties without it being noticed.

As will be seen, he had on this voyage an experience which, though quite other than nautical, he ever afterwards regarded as the crisis of his life. It set him an ideal from which he never looked back. In his log it is entered briefly under the heading '*Enlightenment—New Life,*' and is here written (under date April 20) as supplemented by his sister's remembrance of what he confided to her later.

Third Voyage

London to Adelaide. *Oct. 1901.* The voyage started with a heavy sea aboard in the Channel. I suppose it

was that beastly accident falling off the roof, but it made me feel very unwell.

The Captain gave me charge of the Meteorological Log, and read me out a letter of thanks from the meteorological Office for the observations we had sent in from last voyage (I had taken them every 4 hours and am to continue to do so). He gave me all the Charts of the South Atlantic, South Indian and South Pacific Oceans they had presented. I expect they will be very useful ; one likes these things anyhow. Down by the Equator I found a swallow in my bunk. It is very hot and sultry. I worked at Trigonometry all my spare time, but still feel very unwell.

What magnificent sunsets round about here ! Sometimes we are quite motionless, the sea like glass beneath us and bathed in the sea of colour around us, inexpressibly magnificent. Venus is very brilliant at night.

Nov. 16. We ran into a big storm in the South Atlantic. I was up aloft, reeving and shackling on a sheet, making fast main top-gallant, making fast mizzen top-gallant, when the sail blew away, and the gib blew away through a wrong sheet being let go. Made fast the Crossjack, the Captain was bellowing to everyone at once, and when I got down a tremendous sea came over us, soaking us and somehow I got such a mouthful of it that I nearly choked.

This resolved itself into a wretched damp mist with driving rain for 2 days which made everyone miserable.

Dec. 5. We are in the vicinity of ice and I heard cries of seabirds, similar to Penguins.—Could it be Penguins ? This nearness to the Antarctic Circle always gives me a longing. . . .

Dec. 25. Close into Kangaroo Island, Christmas Day again, and very hot.

Dec. 28. Usual trouble with crew on landing, officers paid off and 18 of the Crew 'cleared.' No man will put in a second voyage with our Captain if he can help it. This gives us a lot of extra work, for the cargo has to be unloaded at once, and the stevedores watched all the time.

This has not been an easy voyage. It seemed splendid

to be made 3rd Mate, and a big step up after being only 2 years an apprentice ; the other apprentices were jolly decent about it too, especially old Eric, who does not grudge me my success, for he knows that it is of vital importance to me to get on, and he has far more at the back of him than I have, *but* the Skipper is out against his officers and is difficult to get on with. Now I am one, I know. He quarrelled with the 1st Mate who went to his room and stayed there for weeks, until we arrived when he was paid off, and walked off the ship.

When in Adelaide I had charge of all cargo, tallying, books, etc. We got in new hands, but they left owing to trouble with the Bosun, later the Bosun cleared—not sorry.

Adelaide. *15 Jan. '02.* I am occupied down the hold all day. I expect they will have her unloaded by the end of this month. We are scheduled to sail from Adelaide and as far as I can see we will do so, unless some stroke of luck occurs to shunt us on to Melbourne.

The 2nd Mate is not well now, and if he is laid up I shall be left in charge of this ship myself.

I would not mind it, in a way, but there is so much to be seen to and done, and so few hands to do it, that it is hardly worth the candle.

The Skipper expects so much of you too, he is quite unreasonable. I have got on very smoothly with him so far, however, and I hope I shall continue to do so. The Captain is the one you have to study aboard a ship, if you wish to get on. I did not get on as well as I might have done with the men this voyage. I think they were jealous of me, and thought, as I was only an apprentice, they could 'come it over' me, consequently there were several rows, but it never came to blows. When they found it was no good they knocked it off. They all hated the Captain, and the Ship, and everything connected with her, and I think that had a lot to do with it. They have nearly all run away now, and though there were some nice fellows, I am not sorry to see the last of most of them. Now that I have got my hand into it, I shall be able to manage the next crew better.

22 Jan. '02. Adelaide is unchanged, we have had rather cooler weather than usual for here, but that has not prevented the mosquitoes from enjoying the liquid part of me.

We bathe regularly in the dock, morning and evening. I went for a moonlight swim in it with Wright, there were fine large waves, and we thoroughly enjoyed it, though the spray made our eyes very sore. I like the routine in port, it is nice to have the whole night in, after being at sea. People ashore don't half appreciate a night's rest. I should not like it always though, that is what I like about sea life, there is always variety.

Loaded wool, wheat, sulphide ore, tallow, skins, etc., for 21 days. The steward has deserted. We are getting ready for sea. I went up to the City to extract the Cook from Jail and brought him aboard in the afternoon; we are getting our new crew dumped aboard, all drunk, desperate rows all the time.

April 7, 1902. Ready for sea, weather chilly and cold—no Melbourne.

April 8. At 3 a.m. all hands were called, manned windlass, sang Chanty, got up anchor, trimmed yards, set sails, wore ship, and were off before breakfast.

April 20. Have been reading a lot and thinking a lot about things. This life at sea, so dependent upon nature, and so lonely, makes one think. I seemed to get into a quagmire of doubts and disbeliefs. Why should we have so many disappointments, when life was hard enough without them? Everything seems a hopeless problem. I felt I should never get out, there was no purpose in it.

One night on deck when things were at their blackest, it seemed to me that Christ came to me and showed me why we are here, and what the purpose of life really is. It is to make a great decision—to choose between the material and the spiritual, and if we choose the spiritual we must work out our choice, and then it will run like a silver thread through the material. It is very difficult to express in words what I suddenly saw so plainly, and it is sometimes difficult to recapture it myself. I know, too, that my powerful ambitions to get on in this world will conflict with that pure light that I saw for a moment,

but I can never forget that I did realize, in a flash, that nothing that happens to our bodies really matters.¹

May 21, 1902. Going round the Horn this time we ran into a succession of terrific storms. The sea became very dangerous, with mountainous waves on our beam—the sails blew away in rags—and we shipped water so heavily that everything was flooded, we were always being soaked. The pig pen was flooded, but I managed to rescue ‘Dennis’ the pig and put him in the Poop, the other wretched pig was drowned. All hands were knocked down at the main braces, and I got my leg foul of a stanchion, and was held under, while a big sea went over us. My leg was hurt, and my lip cut.

The worst storm of all struck us on May 15th. It started with a violent squall of hail and lightning, and then we saw electrical lights on the masts and spars, which I think were St. Elmo’s Fires. Then a most terrific storm burst upon us, with shrieking squalls and blinding hail. The Binnacle went out, and we almost broached to for a moment in the trough of a heavy sea. The wheel tackle block got broken, and everything was indescribable confusion.

The Horn has claimed many a ship, and it looked as if we were going, but no one had time to think in the roaring pandemonium about us. The Skipper was splendid and kept his head all through. It is in moments like these that you see what a man is made of, and he is every inch a seaman. After 48 hours the storm began to die down. We had rounded the Horn once more and our course was set for the North and Home.

The rest of the voyage was much as usual, everyone busy overhauling and repairing the ship ; I was working

¹ Recalling this experience three years later when in the Bay of Bengal, he wrote : ‘ A few years ago, while just on the point of choosing the World for good, a juncture which my early training had long kept at bay, Christ revealed himself to me—not in a vision—not after hearing emotional preaching, etc.—but away at sea. Beside him, the World at its best was nothing—not even life itself. He filled my whole horizon. . . . Who could refuse to stick up for such a friend, who even knew him afar off ? ’

hard for my exam. too and helping Eric with the chronometer. I studied the stars and made charts ; there was a bright meteor out of Scorpio when we were nearing the Equator, and then soon afterwards when we were on the right side of it, I saw Polaris.

July 28, 1902. Arrived in London, and on Aug. 7 I got my appointment as Midshipman R.N.R., and now my next goal will be the Royal Indian Marine Service. I shall not leave anything to chance.

Fourth Voyage

On April 27, 1903, he was made 2nd Mate, and was beginning to feel an old hand at sea.

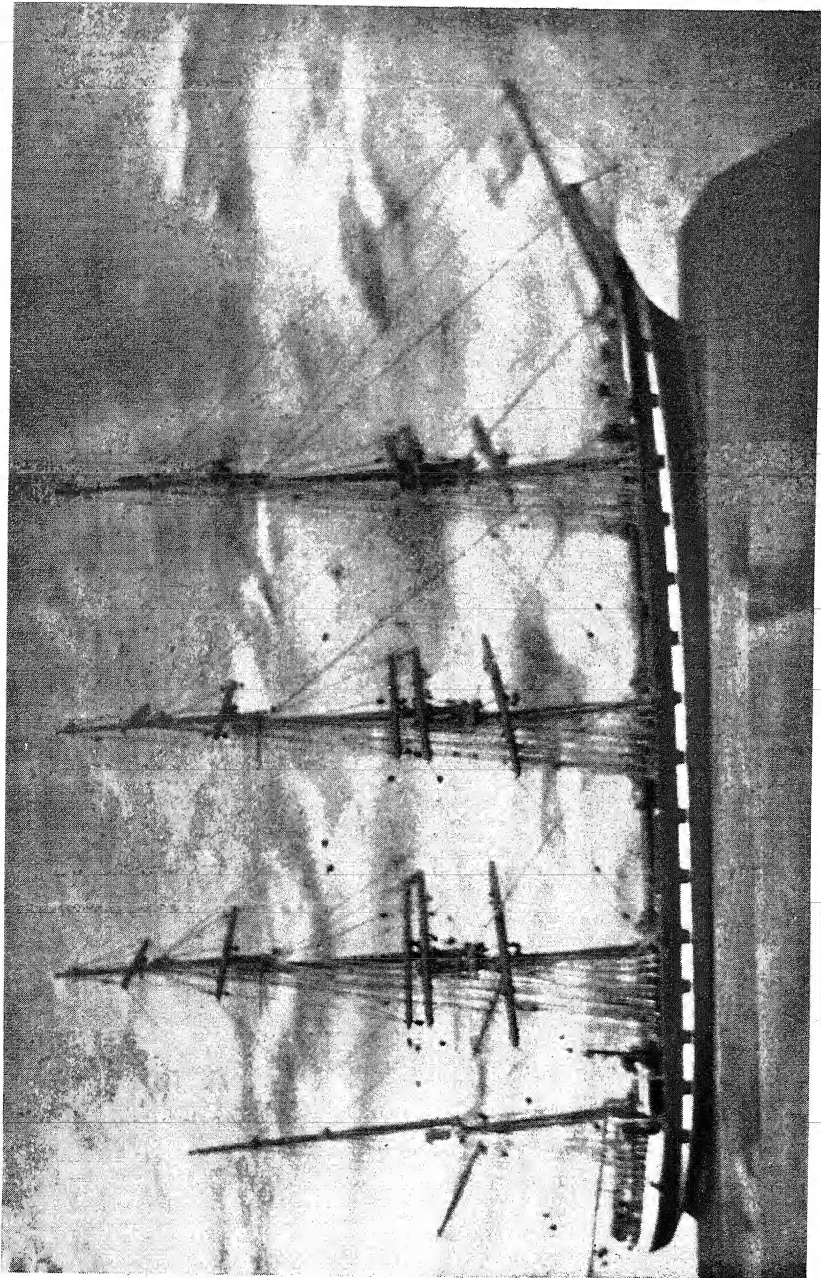
Judging from his log, the fourth voyage passed without incident save for a feat of seamanship on the part of Captain and crew, whereby the *Loch Torridon* achieved a record across the Pacific. This was acclaimed by the *San Francisco Call* of June 13, 1903, as

one of those flying whirls of which ancient shellbacks love to yarn. From Newcastle to San Francisco the big ship swept her way in forty-five days, making the best passage in sixteen years, and one of the smartest on record. . . She crossed the Pacific in almost steamship time, and her appearance off the port sent every mariner along the beach into a reminiscent trance, which gave birth to old stories of the days when it took nerve to be a sailorman.

Before leaving San Francisco Bowers was confirmed at the hands of the Bishop of California on July 27.

With a sailor's affection for a ship in which he has served long and of which he knew instinctively every rope, Bowers made a model of the *Loch Torridon* before leaving it, complete and exact to every brace and stay.

Three and four years later when in the torrid



MODEL OF *LOCH TORRIDON*. BY H. R. B.

waters of the Bay of Bengal or the upper reaches of the Irrawaddy he would often recall these years of his stern apprenticeship, as thus :

Many times I have stood on the *Loch Torridon's* decks when she has been wallowing in a huge sea, and tried hard to imagine that you all had actually stood in the same place. There is something catchy about a place where those you know have been, I think. . . .

Snow !—I don't recollect having seen any now since I was off Cape Horn. Funny place that—how extraordinarily fascinating it seems from an inaccessible distance. All the misery and agony is forgotten, and only the bright side remains. Personally I would go round the Horn again with pleasure and regret it only when it was over.

I can scarcely realize the times when with all hands aloft and chilled out of all feeling we positively cried with cold, or rather tears came from somewhere in your head which until then you imagined was a block of ice.

There are huge pelicans flying about up here [off Yedan]—they remind me of albatrosses and give me heart palpitation on that account. I feel thankful that I *never* growled when in sail even when down among the albatrosses.

A large black note-book written throughout in Bowers' hand and entitled 'Loch Torridon Xmas Magazine 1903' provides the only record of the lighter side of life on these voyages. The contributions show what fun he and his fellow-'prentices must have had together in spite of hardships—and every bit of it hearty healthy fun. Bowers would appear to have been editor as well as scribe of this special number to judge from its title-page, which is inscribed *A Merry Christmas* and illustrated with a bold design of holly bearing his initials, while another page is similarly decorated with mistletoe and *Happy New Year 1904*. The lines of these boyish efforts at draughtsmanship show decision and a

correct sense of form. But the chief interest of this modest periodical is in his caricatures of Egyptian art and obscure cryptograms of topical allusion, because they are prophetic of those contributions which became the popular feature of the *South Polar Times*. Bowers was no doubt the initiator of these latter, of which Dr. Wilson was the artist and himself and Dr. Atkinson were the scribes, and it is suggested by one of their comrades (Simpson) that he got the idea from a series of articles in *Punch* by E. T. Reed—which were commenced in 1900 and continued for six years—entitled 'Azitigleth-mīphanzi' (as it tickleth my fancy).

The magazine contains also a composition of a more serious kind in verse, which so well expresses the writer's attitude to life that, for all its juvenility, it deserves quotation.

CHRISTMAS OFF PATAGONIA 1903

Hail, Christmas morn !
What though Cape Horn be nigh
And if, with dark'ning sky
O'er us and billows high,
Rages the storm :
Or if with moderate gale
Filling each swelling sail,
Swiftly she glides
- Eastward, with foaming track,
Seas cleft and driven back
Fall from her sides—
Come mist or rain or snow,
Fair or foul breezes blow,
Come any weather,
Christmas shall Christmas be
Whether on land or sea,
So we shall joyfully
Keep it together.

Actions and words that may
Have hurt a brother
Let us on Christmas Day
Forget without delay,
And each and in his way
Please one another.
Will our own joy be less
If we our labours
Give not ourselves to bless,
But if we joy profess
We will give happiness
Each to our neighbours.
What if we've work to do,
Can growling help it through,
Or unkind words—tho' true—
Make it go lighter?
Never, but if we take
Pains to—for others' sake—
Smile, we their day will make
Better and brighter.
Come gladly, rise and bring
Praise to our Heavenly King
Who, suff'ring scorning,
Came from His throne on high
For us to live—and die—
In great humility
On Christmas morning.
And as our watch we keep
Out on the mighty deep
We will remember
Loved ones who o'er the foam
Think of us as we roam,
And wish us all at home
On this December.
For Him, for them, may we
Our sorrows bury,
And this day happily,
As one community,
Let us all heartily
Make Christmas merry.

CHAPTER V

The Royal Indian Marine

Ambition and love are the wings of great deeds.

GOETHE.

HAVING served his Indentures on the *Loch Torridon*, and been appointed Midshipman R.N.R., Bowers left sail to gain experience in steam, and joined the S.S. *Cape Breton* leaving England on September 24, 1904, and trading to Australia and the Philippines via New York : this too in the capacity of 3rd Mate while holding a 1st Mate's Certificate, a position by no means congenial to him.

He wrote to his sister whose plans were also unsettled :

Are you finding, like I did, that taking too much thought for the future only made disappointment worse ? As I have had enough of taking my future into my own hands, I will just leave everything to the One who knows my ultimate end already. . . . I hope that all your schemes won't suffer the same squash as mine did. Strange to say though, in spite of it all, I am very well content, and very glad I came to the *Cape Breton*. . . . The Captain is decent enough, and not too high and mighty to yarn to us at table.

Many of the scenes on this cruise were new to him, and some of them were eye-openers.

There was the immense Brooklyn Bridge in New

York with its road for vehicles, path for passengers, overhead railway, and wide tramway: 'it is a wonder they don't have a 2d. Tube underneath.' Then there were the revoltingly superstitious practices of the 'converted' natives of Luzon in the Philippine Islands: 'such practices under the cloak of religion as would make a heathen blush.' And the methods of loading sugar in Panay 'with natives running over it and walking in it; no more soft brown sugar for me. And no more uncooked Chinese-grown lettuces either—I know too much about them now.' He was impressed by the short stature of these Philipinos—4 feet or less—in contrast to those of Luzon, and also by their disproportionate bulk due to a diet mainly of sugar and water.

On the voyage back to New York the ship was stopped for the burial of a seaman who had died suddenly.

The Captain borrowed my Prayer Book and read through the Service, and we tipped up the hatch and let him go. To see that lifeless parcel, under the Union Jack, which had so recently been as alive as any of us, made me think of the littleness of our life, here to-day, gone to-morrow, forgotten the day after—by most.

Having suffered early on the voyage what he describes as 'a violent attack of scepticism,' occasioned by reading Darwin's *Descent of Man*, he wrote to his sister on the subject of his faith.

I must have been off my guard and for days I could believe nothing, everything was darkness . . . till I saw that I had, like hundreds of others, been trying to judge everything from a material standpoint. Once I got back to the old simplicity the light came back.

Later, he would probably have amplified this by

saying that science, while it can describe in detail the biological process of evolving forms of life, cannot wholly explain it, nor account at all for the spiritual evolution of the animating principle which informs them.

He continues :

That's just how it is—we cannot by searching find out God, because our finite minds are too limited to comprehend Him, except in Jesus Christ. 'As thou knowest not what is the way of the Spirit . . . even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.' It is simplicity which is the secret of our inner life, and also what keeps us young. . . .

Meanwhile his mother had been making plans for the removal of her household to the Firth of Clyde in the spring of 1905 and he wrote from Newcastle, N.S.W., on February 13—

. . . I hope you did not find too great a change of temperature in coming North, perhaps it was just the other way. Bute is supposed to be mild enough.

I am extremely keen on hearing from you especially as to how things have turned out. I do hope well for you and the girls. Of course I need say nothing in that way personally, but as your pleasure is mine, your disappointment will be mine too, though I am sure everything *will* be for the best as it has always been in the past. . . .

I wonder what sort of weather you are having at home and trust that it will be a warm summer, Rothesay should be anyhow. You cannot imagine it being cold here, off the coast of Algiers, but the fact is we have been so thoroughly baked that even the Mediterranean temperature seemed cold. I am the only one who has stuck to my whites, and occasionally have felt it jolly cold, though the temperature has never been below 70°. The Old Man laughed at me the other day, but I am going to stick to my guns till we leave Gibraltar. . . .

I am so glad you are pleased with the interior of the house, and will be delighted when I am with you there ; it doesn't matter much to me what the view there is like, as long as you are there.

On February 28, 1905, he was gazetted to the Royal India Marine Service as Sub-Lieutenant.

At that time it was not unusual to take a specially selected candidate from the Mercantile Marine for service in the R.I.M. (now the Royal Indian Navy), especially if he were also R.N.R. ; but such appointments were few and were a coveted distinction. Bowers had put in his application soon after leaving the *Worcester*. It was a kind of far-flung dart which he hardly dared to hope would ever reach its mark ; though as he had put it to his sister, ' I leave no stone unturned, and I leave nothing to chance.' But Captain Wilson-Barker had been active in promoting his application, getting Sir Thomas Sutherland (Chairman of the P. & O. Company) to support it, besides personally visiting the R.I.M. representative in London. ' I could not help thinking at the time,' he says, ' what an asset Bowers would be, when he reached senior rank, in helping to work out the Oceanography of that most interesting part of the sea world. But it was not to be.'

It was not till May that the glad news reached Bowers and in a letter from the Red Sea dated the 25th he wrote to Captain Wilson-Barker—

Thank you very much for your letter, which I received at Colombo together with my appointment to the Royal Indian Marine. . . . I should like to say how very much obliged to you I feel for the trouble that you have taken on my behalf. I am sure that I am indebted to you enough already as regards the Royal Naval Reserve

and the various other things that you have done for me since I went to the *Worcester*.

He was overjoyed on July 1 to obtain his release from the *Cape Breton* in New York, and just caught the first liner available for home—the *Caledonia*, in which he was lucky to secure the last berth in the steerage. This was a new experience for him, since his mess-mates were repatriated emigrants of a primitive type from Central Europe, whose personal habits, and their table manners especially, were peculiar. So ravenous were they that they fought for their food, and Bowers was often obliged to pay for the diversion of an interested spectator of their behaviour at meals by going hungry himself.

His mother had found a house, Caerlaverock, on the hill of Ardbeg in Bute, with a view from the entrance to the Kyles on one hand to the long coast of Ayrshire on the other, and a vista between them of the mouth of the Clyde. Though the old home of Greenock had passed into other hands, she was near the scene of her happiest memories, and here she could knit up many associations that the years had severed, for she was steadfast in friendship, and the friends of her youth were the friends of her age.

The situation delighted her son beyond all his expectations ; he revelled in natural beauty, and the various colourful changes on land, sea, and sky, the deeply indented island and broken mountainous coast, and especially the proximity of water—where he could splash and swim for an hour every day before breakfast, whatever the season—were all just to his fancy.

His eldest sister was away in London and to her

he wrote in the highest spirits, proposing to spend the last few days of his leave with her.

Ardbeg. Bute. Aug. 11, '05. The individual who sits here (at the above address) penning this missive to you is—as you may have recognized by the copper-plate handwriting, your festive brother.

. . . I have decided on going into the R.I.M. after consideration, especially as I think Mother is not averse to the idea. The only thing that sticks in my gills just now is the initial expense. If the money were my own I shouldn't mind, but it seems rotten for a fellow of my age to ask his mother for so large a sum. I know you girls don't mind, but still some sisters would think it rather cool on my part. . . .

And again to Captain Wilson-Barker on September 26: 'I am glad that now I may have the opportunity of seeing you and thanking you personally for the trouble you took to obtain this appointment for me.'

It was on this occasion that, being invited to lunch on the *Worcester*, he was introduced by his old Commandant to Sir Clements Markham, who had 'fathered' Captain Scott's *Discovery* Expedition. The talk centred on Polar exploration, and Captain Wilson-Barker, turning to Sir Clements and indicating Bowers said, 'Here is a man who will be leading one of those expeditions some day.' It was a remark which Sir Clements took more seriously than the subject of it at the time supposed.

He embarked at Southampton, on October 5, on H.M. Transport *Plassy* which he described as 'quite a dream of nautical luxury'; though he chafed at the 'appalling monotony' of being a passenger. His letters amusingly describe the dazzling galaxy of diverse regimental uniforms at

dinner : ‘ gold, scarlet, and blue, beside which our modest bands are absolutely quiet.’

Oct. 25, '05. Whenever the band winds up they play the National Anthem, at which everybody wearing the King's uniform has to salute, or if without a cap on stand to attention. It is rather an amusing sight, the decks covered with chairs and people in every attitude of repose, or engrossed in books, etc. Suddenly the well-known tune starts and like the dead men in the prophet's vision, everybody leaps to a position of rigid attention. It is a sight to remember, and so used do you get to it that I stood to attention in my bath, the other day.

On arrival at Bombay he was transferred for two or three days to the *Dalhousie*, pending the arrival of R.I.M.S. *Dufferin* to which he was posted, and from which he wrote—

There was a beautiful little gazelle on the *Dalhousie*, as tame as a cat. I took such a fancy to it, and wish it were here. The brother is in H.M.S. *Fox*. They got them at Perim. How chaps can have the heart to shoot such gentle harmless creatures I don't know.

Bowers was very proud of his appointment to the Royal Indian Marine, a Service which ranked only second in prestige to the Royal Navy. ‘ Certainly, except for the Navy, I could not have bettered the step I took, and in many respects we are far ahead of the Navy as regards promotion and pay in the higher branches.’ It realized his hopes of making some return to his mother for her sacrifices on his behalf, and as provision for the future. His desire was for her security above all things : for his own he had none—he was a rover, and the insecurity of a rover's life would have been meat and drink to him. He had been trained in a rough school, and among the changes which his promotion

brought him not the least was the welcome change of social atmosphere. Everything delighted him in his new surroundings in which he felt at home at once. One unpleasant happening, however, gave him a shock immediately on joining the *Dufferin*.

Bombay. Nov. 3, '05. I have been allotted a cabin which has never yet been occupied. The ship was new in February. Of course it is fitted up well—with electric-light fans and every convenience, but to my horror I observed cobwebs, and directed my boy to down all curtains and remove everything. When this was done, I pushed up the iron bunk, and then there was what seemed to be an audible scuttle, and out rushed a mouse—as I thought—but *along the wall*. You may guess what it was. If it had been a Cobra I should have been cool, but a *Spider*!!! Well! I retired as gracefully as I dared in my boy's presence, and told him to kill it. He missed it and out it came right up to me—then there was a mess on the deck, I did it as quickly as I could. Oh! it makes me shudder to think of it! I would face anything in heaven or earth rather than a Spider like that! You can imagine my feelings though. I have had the room washed and scoured in every corner, watched it done—and yet I shall always dread sleeping there. I shall most certainly sleep on deck as long as I can.

He keenly appreciated the new comradeship of his messmates in the ward-room, to whom he was known as 'Bosun Bill,' and threw himself with zest into the gay round of festivities in Bombay. For exercise, though his preference was for the skating-rink and the gymnasium, he set himself with earnest perseverance to improve his tennis, a game in which he was by no means proficient, but he made up for what he lacked in skill by his ubiquitous energy, and a buoyancy almost equal to that of the ball. In a yet gentler pastime he practised the same

earnest perseverance : ‘ the Skipper grabbed me by the arm, and hauled me off to the slaughter, so I had to dance or do something,’ and though this was irksome to him it was not so to his partners, who appear with amused delight to have encouraged his perseverance ! It was his study to equip himself in every way for his duties as a naval officer, social and other ; and to be equal to every situation that might present itself. But he was not, never could be, a Society man : ‘ I think in some respects I am not mature yet—quite different from most chaps of my age, and looked upon as a sort of conundrum.’

He felt that he had been ‘ luckier ’ than most of his contemporaries on the *Worcester* ; he had certainly climbed the ladder of promotion in double quick time ; and though this satisfied an urge within him which he could not repress—his own personal ambition to ‘ get on ’—yet it also constituted for him a problem of real urgency : how to reconcile it with the spiritual way of life he had deliberately chosen ? ‘ To Henry,’ says his sister, ‘ the spiritual life was as real as the material and he was always torn between the two, with a tremendous zest for both, and that was an ever-present problem, which made his life a constant struggle.’ His letters at this time reveal this conflict of desires in him, as is inevitable in the case of an idealist living in the world.

His views at this stage of his experience of the way to maintain discipline among seamen, ‘ many of them of such character as to be excluded from anything except jails and sailing ships,’ are thus expressed—

Show them you don't care a hang for their opinion or comfort, or anything else, and then treat them according to their capabilities, and if good and reliable give them their due. In that way you get more respect and work from them than all the dancing and roaring of the hopeless fools who try it on. I certainly believe in bellowing if necessary. Occasionally the *Dufferin* echoes with my own dulcet tones, but that is all premeditated, just to let the men know I am there, if they feel inclined to take things slackly.

Only a few hours after expressing these views he had occasion to put them to a crucial test.

Towards Rangoon. 17 Dec., '06. The battered and damaged *Dufferin* now proceeds along a sea of peace once more. The surroundings are simply lovely really. Just enough wind to ripple the flat swell-less surface, which is all a clear dark blue, sky cloudless, the late afternoon sun just right as regards warmth, and, in the distance, like little painted blotches, the Andaman Isles are just appearing. I am a great admirer of the beauties of Nature generally, but like them especially when there is plenty of water in them. Lately we have had water of the wrong sort, which I will tell you about directly without endeavouring to exaggerate. The day after to-morrow and we shall once more be among the Pagodas and in the muddy Irrawaddy, that is, provided no further ill-luck meets us.

We departed from Madras on the 13th at noon amid driving rain and mist, with an increasing swell which made us look sideways at the barometer. The wind and sea increased rapidly all the time, and after sunset general conditions plainly indicated that we were in for a cyclone. The next thing was to ascertain how it was bearing and travelling in relation to our position—quite a possible thing, as these storms all revolve by one law.

(Here follows a detailed description, with diagrams, of the ship's course in relation to the path of the storm. Two possible courses were open :

the wrong one was unfortunately chosen, heading towards the vortex, which was only just avoided.)

About 3 a.m. the sea was running high, but we still continued tearing through it at 14 knots, the ship running like a duck and as dry as a bone, when suddenly, out of the darkness was seen a huge wave, simply towering over the others, coming towards us. The wave preceding this monster was pretty well over the average, and on it the ship of course rose like a cork, plunging down into the hollow, where of course, before she had a chance to rise, the big chap was on top of her—water, iron, wood, men, sheep, goats, dogs, tanks, ropes and general wreckage being floated aft in one confused medley.

Fortunately our bulwarks saved any men from being taken overboard, as we could hardly have launched a boat in such a sea. The ship was slowed down immediately and the course changed to the South, on which course we ran for over a day, the weather improving as we got out, till the 2nd day following we were able to resume our original course. The damage done by the wave was greater than I have ever seen one do before.

Of course our speed increased it, but you could hardly believe it unless you saw a solid iron house flattened like cardboard, the iron all twisted and rivets knocked out like corks. A stream anchor, lashed with chains, was knocked away bodily, literally picked up and deposited on a hydraulic capstan platform, some distance off, a big lump of the iron base of which it knocked right off. All awning, booms and stanchions went like matchwood, and the iron funnels, belonging to the galleys, joined the happy stream as if they had been paper, lead sheeting was ripped off the deck like you would peel an orange and any such trifles as heavy iron ventilators and teak-wood ladders, disappeared altogether. Double tarpaulins over the main hatch were ripped off, so that the water descended among the scared Tommies like a cataract.

Our own sea boats and their crew, who sleep on deck beneath their boat—ready for any emergency—were picked up and flung right aft, every one of them being injured by the other wreckage.

The unfortunate goats had the worst time, only 5 out

of a large number could be permitted to live after it, most of them being terribly mangled. We thought this was all till on going below, we found the beams under the fo'c'sle head were bent very badly and the solid, heavy iron stanchions—made extra heavy to support them, were bent into semicircles. This may necessitate the taking up of the whole of the deck forward, and if we find that the windlass has suffered, it will be far more serious still. So much for the effects of one wave. We expect to fix off things temporarily forward, till we get back to Bombay again. Now the sea is the colour of pea soup, which speaks plainly of the delta of the Irrawaddy.

I am hoping that no orders to join either the *Dalhousie*, *Mayo*, or River Patrol boats, are awaiting me. It would be awful rot to leave the *Dufferin* now, especially as it is practically certain we are to go to China in the Monsoon.

2 Feb., '07. I have made quite a name for myself in the capacity of 'Mate of the Deck.' Only the 3 biggest ships have enough officers for one to act in this capacity, so a large number of chaps never have it. . . . I am glad my previous experience has enabled me to make a good show, otherwise my position would be unfortunate.

When asked in a letter from home what his thoughts were at the time of the cyclone he replied :

I never once thought of 'what next?' or anything at all. I have never realized danger till afterwards; at the time I have only thought of the immediate occasion and its circumstances. Funny, isn't it? a sudden exit from one's mortal husk seems to possess no very terrifying features.

CHAPTER VI

The Irrawaddy

The Irrawaddy possesses many advantages for river navigation and is much superior to the Ganges or the Indus.

The difficulties of its navigation have been much exaggerated. That some dangers and difficulties exist, there is no doubt, but none that common prudence and caution cannot overcome. A steamer and flat drawing 4 feet can get to Bhamo in the dry season, while during the rains there is water enough for a Battleship.

CAPTAIN ALEXANDER BOWERS (*The Bhamo Expedition*).

NOW began a totally different kind of experience for him, the fascination of which never palled—the navigating of the Irrawaddy, a river of noble dimensions, whose length exceeds 1,000 miles. It was reckoned a difficult river, with its constantly changing channels, its currents, seasonal rises and falls, sharp bends and deep defiles. For a ship to answer the helm, whirlpools had to be taken at full steam when coming with the current; while it was often necessary for the pilot to have leadsmen each side ‘singing out the soundings as fast as they could dump the leads.’ During the dry season it was possible for a steamer, with the usual ‘Flats’ attached and drawing no more than 4 feet of water, to proceed as far as Bhamo on the upper reaches, but during the rains the river rose from 40 to 70 feet, overflowing its

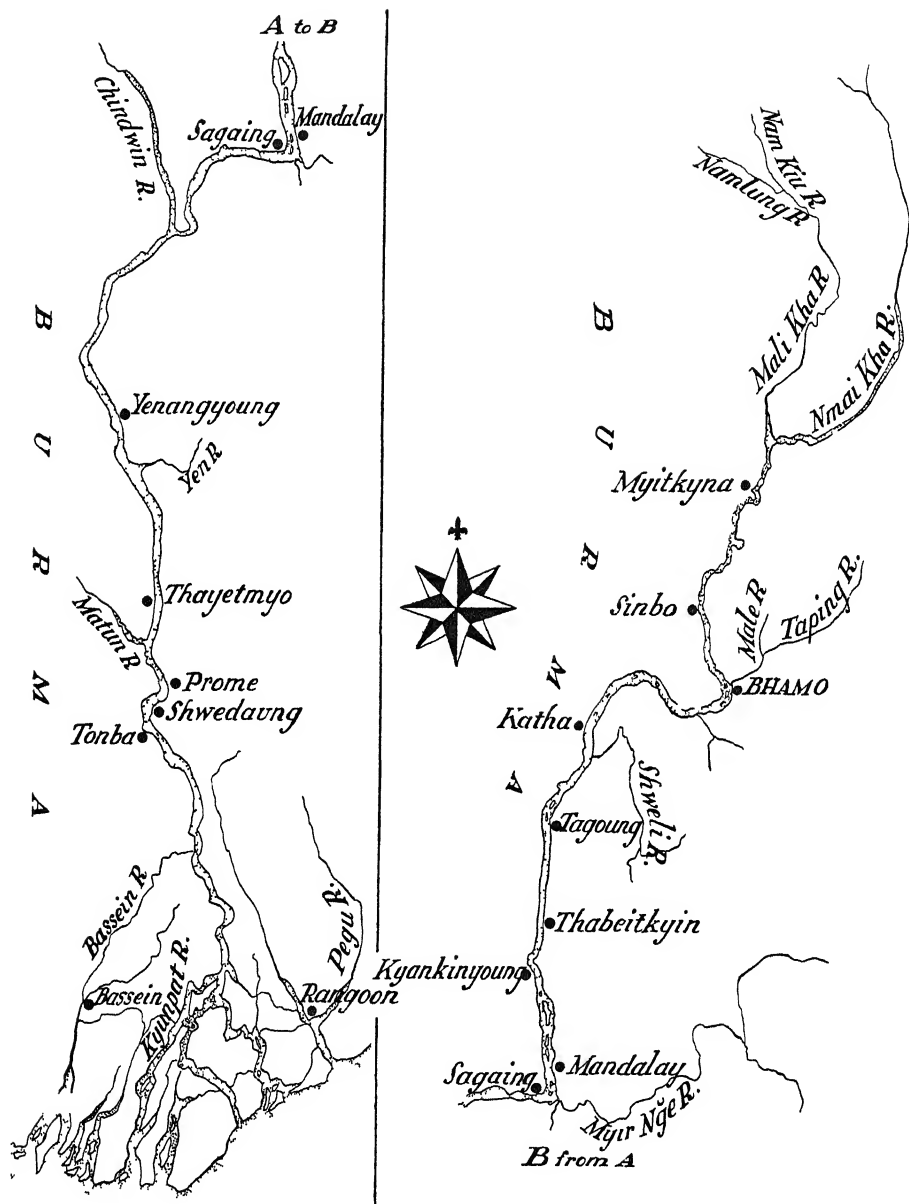
banks and obliterating landmarks, while sandbanks and islands were submerged.

According to Bowers' father, however, there were few difficulties and dangers that prudence and caution could not overcome. Young Bowers, obeying the inherited instinct, was as keen on navigating the Irrawaddy as his father had been and looked back upon the nine months spent on it as one of his happiest times in the Service.

The *Sladen's* duty soon after his joining her was to convey H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught and his party from Rangoon to Mandalay, and thence to Prome : ' Somehow I feel diffident about Royalties,' he wrote, ' but the Duke has won the heart of every soul in the ship, and I always feel King Edward must be rather a jolly old buster.'

The voyage brought him into the waters where his father had trafficked, and into touch with several of his father's old friends whom he found ' very hearty,' among them Sir Herbert Thyrkle-White, the Lieutenant-Governor, and the Captain of the Irrawaddy Flotilla ' who greeted me like a long-lost son.' The Irrawaddy being unlighted, progress was impossible at night, and during the dark hours the ship was made fast to trees or stakes on the bank, ' a weird method of navigation.' The climate was like a ' furnace,' and his Christmas home-letters drew from him a wistful rejoinder.

Good old Christmas, what would the year be without it ! What excellent times you seem to have been enjoying. How fine it must be to toboggan and feel wintry. I should enjoy it tremendously. Your account of the snow, and general wintriness simply makes my mouth water. When I come home a decrepit Anglo-Indian with yellow complexion, etc., I may not appreciate it



THE IRRAWADDY

so much, at present however, snow and ice would be to my mind the 'last word' of delight—I shall have to play with mudballs up the Irrawaddy myself I'm afraid!

The first unlucky occurrence was an accident to the *Sladen's* Flat when off Rangoon.

Thyetmyo to Minbu. *March 22, '07.* On arrival aboard H.R.H. signified his desire to be off at once. I did not like the look of the strong ebb that was then running, anyhow we had made a mistake—for want of knowledge—in mooring the boat head down, so off we went to learn a little by experience. The river has a sharp bend across the other side, which causes the tide to run, when ebbing, almost at right angles to the main stream. Of this we had no notion and the Harbour Master ought certainly to have told us, but he was not aboard.

We let go and were at once swirled off by the tide at a tremendous rate. There was a huge tramp, S.S. *Folgate*, lying at a buoy and at an angle to the stream on account of the tide.

Our head took a decided swing to Port when the tide caught it, so that there was nothing but to go ahead full speed and endeavour to cross the S.S. *Folgate's* bows. I had just catted the anchor, when I saw her take another swerve to Port and then realized a smash was inevitable. I at once rushed amidships to see if I could do anything, and just arrived in time to see the huge buoy close under A 'Flat' which was on our Port side. Before this, of course, we were going full speed astern, but nothing could have availed in that current.

Thank God it wasn't the ship or the Governor's Barge. It happened all in a few instants—only 3 minutes after letting go from the wharf. I simply prayed that she would not hit, but I knew that nothing could prevent it. A 'Flat' simply doubled up like a cardboard box, her deck rose like a pyramid, and smashed in two at the top. She was, of course, crowded with servants and animals, and had she only hit amidships I am sure there would have been a horrible loss of life. As it was she

was undamaged aft, and we at once dropped alongside the *Folgate*, making fast to her buoy.

When I saw the smash I was afraid the Flat would sink like a stone, and scrambled over the deck—which resembled an obstacle race—and managed to jump down below through a big hole. Though I could see daylight through her sides, only a few inches above the water, she did not appear to be making any so I ran up on deck and started giving orders in my most casual manner as though a collision was an everyday occurrence with us. There was practically no panic among the servants, and very soon everybody was under way, removing things from Flat to ship.

The next bit of bad luck was a leak in the new Flat.

Mandalay. *March 31, '07.* On our trip up from Rangoon my troubles did not end with the collision. Before we left the Bassein Creek I had discovered a leak in 9 Flat which was very old and felt the change from salt to fresh water. While feeling for the hole I actually stuck my finger *through* her bottom and made another. By the time the thing was properly located about 4 holes had been made (this is not a sailor's yarn), and the water was squirting in like a sluice. I was afraid the whole plate would be forced up by the inrush, and at once got a pump to bear and a 'Topgallant Sail,' or rather an awning under her bottom. With wedges, indiarubber and cement, we practically sealed it up. Before our destination, however, we had to doctor two similar ones in her. Anyway, we have brought her up 1,000 miles, and she is now safe on a slip being repaired. I am afraid she wants some doing up—I should suggest a new hull.

That these mishaps were somewhat of a strain to those concerned, in a part of the world 'where mosquitoes do not improve tempers,' is shown by the following letter :

Mandalay. *Feb. — '07.* The Commander is an absolute sahib to the backbone. . . . He is considerate, but

not a bit soft, in fact hard as nails, with a very hot temper hidden away somewhere under a strong will, which keeps it in check. He likes me to run my own job, and objects to anything more than possible being referred to him. What I like about him is, that while being quite decent, he doesn't make himself cheap—a most deplorable thing in a Senior man. I am sure he would resent any suspicion of familiarity and yet, officially, he treats me as an equal, and as regards my work of running the ship never interferes, and if he wants anything always *asks* for it.

He was as cool as if in Church during the whole show of the accident to the Flat, the only remark he made to me was—'We seem to be haunted by ill-luck, don't we?' He was very quick though in getting tied up to the buoy, and making everything fast. He certainly is an excellent man for an emergency. He candidly admits that the *Sladen* passes his comprehension; he is quite 'at sea' on the river. . . .

All this would be all right if he were careful, but though 'full speed' is excellent for a deep-sea ship generally, it does not *always* pay on the river. This was certainly an unavoidable accident, but at other times we have dashed past huge native boats at full speed with about 18 ins. clear of them on one side, and about 1 foot clear of the bank on the other, steamed at night full speed into a native village, and run aground goodness knows how many times. Personally, I hate a man to be too careful and slow, but when you see a prospective smash it is not too pleasant to reflect on the immense amount of work and trouble and losing of tempers that will take place before it goes right. I have two or three times told him just what I thought about some of our minor capers. We are very good friends all the same, anyhow.

The Royal Party having disembarked at Mandalay, the ship proceeded northwards to Bhamo on April 7, laden with mountain battery guns and mules, and the artillery troops attendant: 'rather a come-down from Princes and Governors to mules.' Having completed his quarterly reports

and accounts, Bowers looked forward to some leisure in which to prepare for his first examination in Hindustani. But meanwhile he determined to make acquaintance with the territory of the Shan States, which had been the scene of his father's exploits thirty years before. An account of his excursion there on his bicycle is contained in a letter written from Thabet-kyn a week later.

April 15, '07. In Bhamo everything was very curious indeed, the Burmans being quite in the minority and replaced by Shans, Kachins, and Chinese. On the second day I decided to go for a bike ride towards the Chinese frontier—which is only about 40 miles away, I need hardly say I did not expect to do 40 miles, especially as after the first 20 it gets hilly. I decided to go as far as possible anyhow, so bust off at 5 a.m. with some grub and water on my trusty steed. The Hill tribes are friendly but a little uncertain, and there being numerous caravans and miles of jungle to pass through, I thought it just as well to take a Service revolver, and a dozen rounds of Webley .450 Ball. This I did not need however.

In darkness I started and at daylight was bowling along a road fringed with jungle. As the light increased it was simply magnificent. Later I came to a low flat rice plain interspersed with streams, the bridges over some being broken, which necessitated up-bike and ford it. I passed two of these before I got into the Jungle proper, then it was simply grand. There were enormous teak trees that made one giddy to look up at, and dense bamboo clumps—simply impenetrable. There is an enormous amount of big game in Burmah, tigers, elephants, bison, etc. It is all shut up in these forests though, and therefore almost unobtainable. At 13 miles I came to a large village, and then, contrary to my expectation, started to go uphill. I had met several Chinese caravans, which made me think I was on the main China road. I found later that I was wrong, having turned away from the first and got into a China

road all right, but a hill route. I had a good picnic breakfast, and proceeded up and up, riding where I could, walking otherwise. It got more and more rough and narrow, and I got proportionally thirsty, till I was simply desperate for water. About noon I was absolutely gasping and simply prayed for it. I had hardly done so, curiously enough, and when rounding a bend, I saw a copse below me with a clear little stream, trickling down. I positively rushed at it and obtained all the necessary. Never has water seemed so nice to me, even when short in sail I have never felt so bad for it as the ascent of that mountain, pushing a bicycle, caused me to feel. Refreshed, I proceeded up and up, meeting numerous armed Shans, whom I stopped and tried to buy one of their curious swords [daks]. They were most good-natured, and very curious altogether; none of them would sell their weapons, though one thought a lot over 5 Rupees I offered him.

At 1 p.m. I reached the summit and fell exhausted under a tree. It was quite amusing to watch all the strange jungle creatures in the trees, and on the whole I enjoyed my hour's rest very much. To get back over 20 miles before dark necessitated an early start, so I soon got under way, and then my front tyre went pop irreparably. By the time I had quite ascertained that it was impossible to repair it, it was about 3 p.m. So then I had to hurry up and rode all the way—nearly—down those hill slopes in some places so steep that I had to lean back for fear of going over my handle-bars. The brakes were splendid though, and I arrived down safely. The bike none the worse too! When I arrived aboard after dark I was pretty well done I can tell you.

A funny little incident occurred on the way back though. I returned to my former stream, and while contemplating it found that the sand was glittering. A short inspection soon showed me that it was interspersed with *gold*. So I took a few handfuls back. It is certainly gold, and were I not in the Service I might prospect. As it is I have kept *chup*, but what can be done with a jungle stream is beyond my power of conjecture. Funny, isn't it? I have since heard that gold is *supposed* to be in those hills, and that some people are searching for it.

No doubt they will have discovered my 'claim' long ago.

Back in Mandalay, he found the summer heat almost insufferable, with its accompaniment of noxious insects. His family wrote to him from the alps of Switzerland, and he tried to keep cool by the exercise of his imagination.

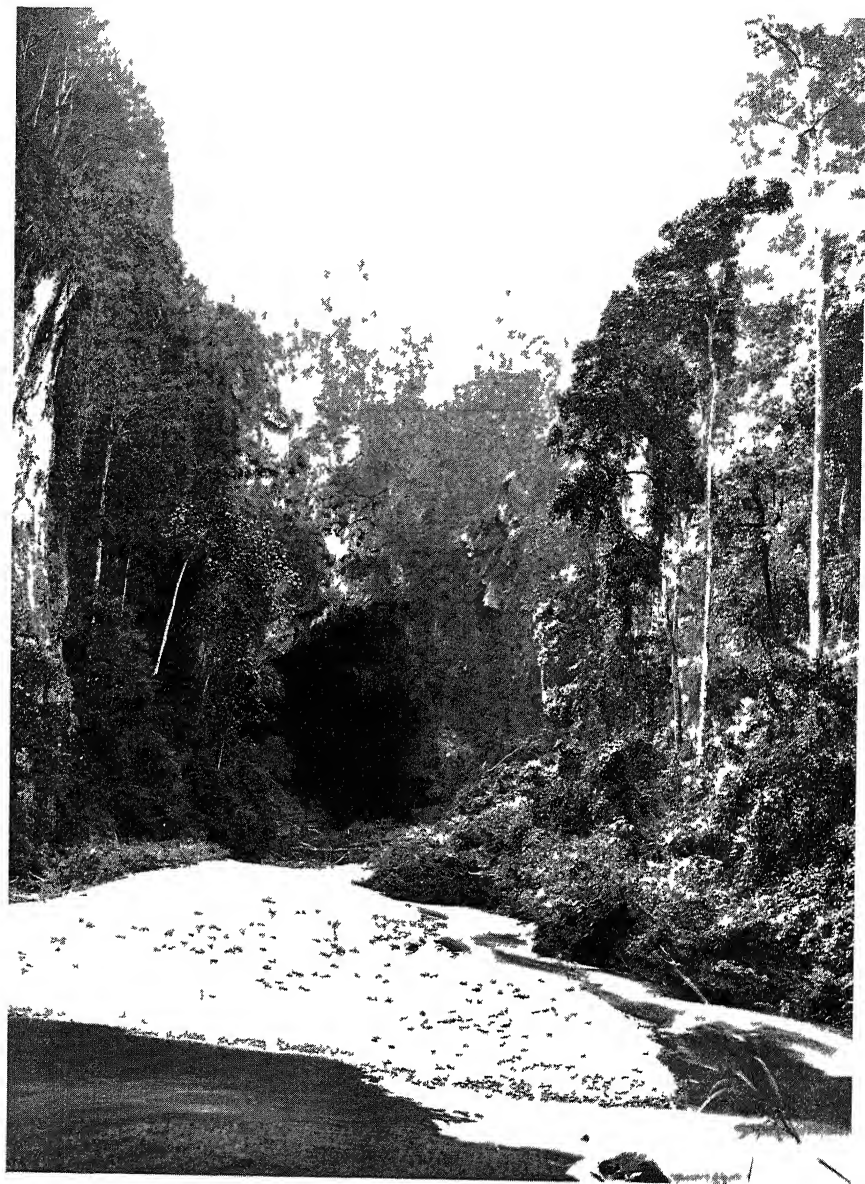
May 11, '07. The views must be splendid indeed. The snow takes my eye more than anything though. I don't recollect having seen any now since I was off Cape Horn.

Snow! how I would wallow in it if I could! If ever you find me preferring heat to cold, please hit me with the nearest thing handy. The heat here is getting horrible. Yet we are cheerfully assured that it is nothing like what it was last year.

From now till the beginning of the rains it is very warm and just after them, too. It is excellent for Spiders as regards development. Two brutes emerged from the Captain's room the other day. I sent a Petty officer to chase one and he caught it in his hand, its great hairy legs were so long that they all protruded between his fingers. I saw it safely into the water too. Ants are simply innumerable, no matter where you go. If I kill a spider, it is within 5 minutes invisible for hundreds of ants. They go indiscriminately into shoes, trousers, coats and singlets. Attracted by the starch in my cap cover (I having left it carelessly on deck) they simply filled it, and putting it on I was quickly reminded of the fact.

I am about to take my evening swim. We have a tiny native canoe which I was assured none but a native could balance himself in. I tried it in bathing kit and found it difficult to fall out—add to this that I did not care if I did and there you are. . . .

The mosquitoes are simply awful. My cabin is full, and I dare not go in there for more than 2 minutes at a time, and then have to double out again surrounded by a cloud. In the bathroom it is a protection to cover oneself with soap, at least those parts which are not under



GOKTAK GORGE

water. As I only have a fair-sized tub, my shoulders and knees are exposed to their ravages. . . .

In my skiff the other night I rowed among bamboo house roofs, and found myself over a place that 23 days before had been sun-baked land. . . .

My evening excursions are delightful. Last night I tried to get round an island, but found the little passage blocked with huge timber rafts. The natives are very curious as I pass, and often run to the sides of the raft to see what the white creature in the boat really is.

His next escapade was to make a descent without a guide of the Goktak Gorge, that stupendous chasm whose drop is nearly 900 feet from the bridge which spans it to the natural tunnel through which the Irrawaddy runs with the speed of a millrace. He was impressed no less by the natural wonder of the gorge than by the engineering feat of bridging it ; and, careful of detail as always, made a sketch of it to scale. He succeeded in crawling through the tunnel along the steep face of the bank and was rewarded by a magnificent scene in the further mouth—vast cliffs—perpendicular with continual water showing rainbows all down them and covered with maidenhair ferns. On returning I met another party with guides who looked daggers at me for not having patronized one of them ! The next day I re-descended with my boy only in order to show him the cave. This time I met with a chap who had practically made all the facilities for getting about. He showed me where one could cross the river and get right out clear. It was a plank about a foot under water in a narrow place with the water running over it like a mill sluice. Really, if I had not seen this chap go over it I should, I fear, never have dared, even if I had seen it. As it was it was ticklish, but I was not going to see a land-lubber do it alone, so I went across with as much unconcern as if I had already done it a dozen times. We then had to jump from rock to rock like chamois ; it was *quite* exciting,

however. We got back again as there is no way up that side, and then I off clothes and went in for my second bath in the same place as I had bathed the day before—a rock pool about 50 feet above the river, supplied with roof, water and about 3 or 4 feet deep all over. It was glorious after that ; I sat on a stone which had been hollowed out by falling water, and let some of it fall on me from 100 feet above—it was like gravel on one's head—I was then ready for about $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours' steady climbing out of the gorge.

He had been working with alternating feelings of hope and fear at the first part of his language examination, and his hopes had risen on discovery of a 'munshi' who knew the ropes, and could speak English fluently. Some languages (like German) are said to present to the student who seeks to mine their hidden mysteries a hard crust but a soft core : these have many rules and few exceptions. Others (like Italian) present a crust which is invitingly easy to pierce, but a core which gets harder and yet harder : these have few rules and a multitude of exceptions. Hindustani would appear to belong to the former class.

With him my hopes rise steadily, and I find that, after all, my many moons' arduous drudgery at it have not been in vain, and that clouds are at last beginning to clear like the dawn. People say that learning Hindustani is always like that, you seem to make no headway, when suddenly it all seems to come in a flash—it's that 'flash' I am chasing now—and though I can occasionally see a bit of it my 'think-tank' is strained to the uttermost to hang on to the rest.

If only they did things more quietly you would feel more at ease, but they will print huge official sheets and send them through your M.T.O. and commanding officer. You would wonder how they find time to make such a fuss about it. It starts with a long rigmarole and then

‘In accordance with Reg. So and So,’ etc., and then at the bottom of this comes the name of the trembling victim.

The fatal day arrived, and he reported at the Fort in full uniform, ‘to be ushered—of all places—into the Court-Martial Room!’

June 9, '07. In these gloomy surroundings I had my envelope opened, and was handed a Part I paper by a liverish Major, who had been appointed to see that I did not crib. He did not conceal the fact that the proceedings bored him, why he did not bring in a book or something I can't think—as it was, he fidgeted, sighed, constantly looked at his watch, till I could have kicked him lustily. ‘You have just three quarters of an hour, sir,’ ‘You have exactly 20 minutes, sir—’ This accompanied with flies galore, and no punkah, made me savage!

Paper after paper was re-scanned, because I had worked things unusually. However, I got round it all and left no blanks, the result will come from Madras in about 2 weeks. The Munshi says the Paper is an exceptionally hard one, but that is what he would say!

The papers were sent to Madras for examination, the *Sladen* meanwhile proceeding up the Irrawaddy for another cruise to Bhamo. A fortnight later Bowers received two telegrams on the same day, June 27—the first informing him of failure to pass the examination; the second instructing him to take over temporary command of the R.I.M.S. *Bhamo* on arrival at Kyankingong. The same telegram also contained news of his Commander's promotion. It was a happy ending to a friendship that had stood the test of many small passages of arms.

The whole trouble was that he came on to the river full of ‘Deep sea’ ideas, and at a time when he was just a little too senior to learn. It is a most silly idea to send such senior men up here, it is a youngster's job pure and

simple, a job for a man who is himself learning daily. From sea navigation it is as opposite as railway from marine engineering. . . . On top of all this, for want of another place, they send a man within a few weeks of promotion up a river where he has never been before. . . . As things are I can't help grinning and cackling and spouting generally ; whether it cheers him up I can't say. We have had our ' tiffs ' and they are over, and I have as great a respect for him as ever, both as a thorough gentleman and a competent naval officer. I have a great admiration for him : he is so absolutely straight. I was so pleased to hear of his promotion, that I quite forgot my own good fortune till he congratulated me. Of course my command of the *Bhamo* will only be for a week, still even that is something to be very thankful for. A real live R.I.M. Ship ! Who is to relieve me I have not heard. Meanwhile acting Lieut.-Commander Bowers will officiate, and do his best not to smash things up.

CHAPTER VII

The Irrawaddy (continued)

Continuing North we arrived at Bhamo after being seven days on our journey from Mandalay. Wherever we touched, the poorer people used to flock on board in thousands ; those who could not manage to get on board knelt on the bank in an attitude of devotion looking on a steamer for the first time.

This arrival at Bhamo on July 21, 1868, was a very great event accomplished, as we had been told from the first that no steamer could get up so far for want of water. In fact all sorts of expedients were used to deter us from taking a steamer, and it was only by threatening to get another steamer, that the King of Burma, afraid that an English vessel should invade the Sacred River between Mandalay and Bhamo, consented to give one of his own vessels. This he did with a very ill grace and the frightful rapids and still more dangerous rocks disappeared as we advanced, as in fact they had only existed in the brains of the Burmese themselves.

CAPTAIN ALEXANDER BOWERS (*Journals*).

R I.M.S. *Bhamo*. Approaching Tagaung. *June 30, '07*. Here I am squatted at my table, a helmsman alongside me, a clear stretch of river ahead, and a good ship under me, punching against a tremendous current at about 8 or 9 knots over the grounds, with all her fancy mechanism and expensive engines and other trifles dependent on my little red nob ! You would think perhaps that that red substance would stand on end occasionally ; it probably will, but up to date it hasn't as I have only been in command 18 hours. The fact is, it hasn't had time, and I have hardly realized it myself yet and occasionally feel myself to make sure I am awake.

The fact that I am here, is very evident, the fact that I am jolly happy is also visible, and the fact that I am exceedingly thankful you will not doubt. How many fellows in the service would not give anything for such a chance as I am at present enjoying. But here's the lucky one 'Right in it,' an individual remarkable in nothing but appearance.

If his brother-officers in the Service had been asked to name the characteristics in Bowers that most struck them, they would probably have replied—his incurable optimism, his happy unconventionality, and his perfectly preposterous good luck. Perhaps the last was, in part at any rate, due to the other two in combination. He had met old friends of the *Worcester* from time to time in various ports, some of whom had been 'trying for years to get into the R.I.M.'; others who, disheartened by failure, had given up the sea. Yet here he was a Sub-Lieutenant, not yet twenty-four years old, considered capable enough to be put in temporary command of a ship of the fleet. 'You get all the luck, Bowers,' they told him enviously; 'everything comes your way.' And one of them added, but without malice, 'Your bad luck will come all at once.'

Unconventional he undoubtedly was both in thought and in behaviour, as is evident in his religion, and in his social life; but it was an unconventionality of a sane and wholesome kind, for a little more of which the world would be happier. As his sister has said, 'There wasn't a twist in him.' On the subject of religion he wrote to her as follows :

I am sure you realize as I do the hopeless fallacy of all religious 'forms' and 'creeds.' Personally, I continue

to go to whatever Christian church is handy simply to worship God in my own way, but do not identify myself with any beyond the fact that I am a Christian (would I could say I were a better one)—I wish for no further identity. . . . So long as you are that, you are really no denomination.

Socially, he was hail-fellow-well-met with everyone, but yet contrived to steer his own course by his own star. His gay zest for life, varied interests, and restless activity gave him a horror of the effete and jaded existence of many 'jaundiced Anglo-Indians' he saw about him, and in one of his last letters from the *Sladen* at Mandalay, he wrote :

How the time does whizz ! If it goes like this when I'm on leave, what will I do ? It's awful to think about it. I am already conniving how I can save a day here or a night there. So I seek to reach the battlements of my aerial castles. Everybody, however, is agreed that 12 months' leave is more than a chap wants. I can't think how they occupy themselves. Times without number, I have heard chaps (bachelors, of course) say 'after 9 months we were bored to death,' and that the last 2 months were a martyrdom.

It does annoy me to hear chaps talk like that—why don't they buy bricks, or jigsaw puzzles or transfers ? If a chap hasn't enough originality to do something without a few others to help him out, he ought not to take more than 6 months' leave.

The only thing people are thinking about just now is the 'Calcutta Sweep.' The fever of excitement among level-headed people is extraordinary, and some get as many as 50 tickets. However, I will be happier with my own earnings.

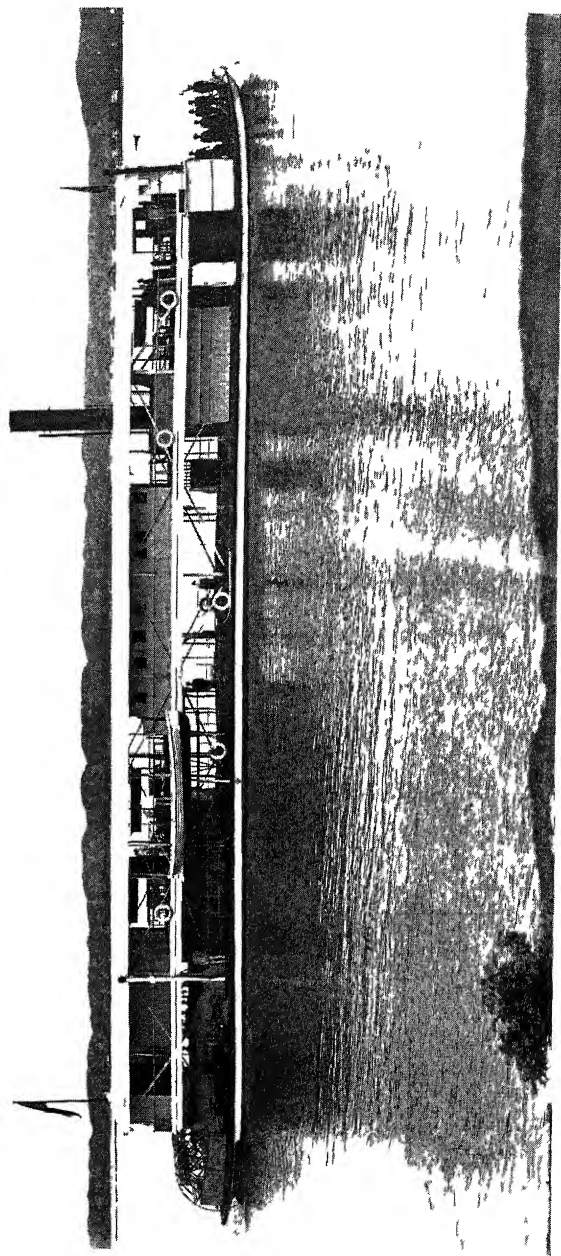
But for all his individualism he was an out-and-out Imperialist with an almost immoderate pride in the exploits of his forerunners in the Service who had made the Bay of Bengal a pacific ocean, and opened up the trade of Burmah ; and he looked

forward to the day when he should be called upon if need be to fight for his country.

Lord Kitchener has shaken up military things out here considerably, and these changes and withdrawals have altered old conditions. Burmah, too, is absolutely peaceful, and does not require either armed ships or as many troops as before. The latter have been re-distributed, and have been withdrawn from the unhealthy river towards the cool hill stations, Myitkyma and Maymyo. All these things considered and the fact that the railways have much improved and are extending, the Government have notified that they are considering the advisability of withdrawing us from the River entirely. Lord K. says that when his scheme is perfected, he will not require any military transport by water in Burmah, the railways now being quite efficient—no fighting, no trooping, no nothing—if these things are to be there will be no need for the ‘Star of India’ to float over these waters any longer, and ‘Heaven’s Light our Guide’ will only be seen among the host of Red Ensigns in Rangoon. With the disappearance of our flag from the River will be the effacing of our memory from a province which owes to us what can never be repaid. It was the ships of the Indian Navy who first entered the River, it was the Indian Marine and later the Royal Indian Marine which fought out the last two Wars, carried up the troops, Naval Brigade, etc., bombarded all the towns that were attacked, and finally opened up Upper Burmah after the capture of Mandalay. . . .

These sedition rumours are not nice, they are headed by fanatics, but must have a bad effect on the masses, now we are educating them to chuck us out as fast as ever we can, and blighters with—so-called—‘democratic’ ideas, go and give natives, and doubtful ones too—altogether unripe for it—high positions held by the most trustworthy Englishmen. . . .

Now the artisans and cheap-labour specimens have come out here and said to the coolie—whose very existence depends on our occupation practically—‘You’re my equal, why are you salaaming? Get up and say you won’t work for less than 1/- a day.’ No longer is the



SS BHAMO ON IRRAWADDY

Sahib what he was, no longer do they respect the nation, who—by the Grace of God—licked them times without number at odds of 1 to 100, and gave them peace, famine relief, protection, and a degree of happiness thrown in.

I love my country, and trust that I shall not be found wanting when the day comes to act. That dear old country—I wonder if a fraction of its inhabitants appreciate its worth, or does it require a probation of long absences to show one that that little island is—under *any* circumstances of weather or anything else—the best, the very best place on God's earth.

His crew on the *Bhamo* were Lascars, whom he much preferred to Goanese who 'by virtue of being the officers' flunkies, consider themselves infinitely superior to the Lascars who are worth any six of them.'

The *Bhamo* was the only stern-wheeler gunboat in the fleet, registered at 255 tons, just under 200 feet in length, and of only 2 feet 6 inches draught. In a high wind with so little immersion her rudder was almost useless; but she was the only vessel that could be navigated for the 300-miles stretch of the river beyond Bhamo, or up the Chindwin tributary of the Irrawaddy.

Bowers' first duty was to take the ship up-stream to Katha, and then down-stream to Mandalay. His task was rendered anxious by the fact that her abnormally high upper structure caught by a strong wind 'spun her like a teetotum,' and that he had to keep her at full speed through narrow channels to make her answer the helm. But he got through. (Later, he found that he had been given the most difficult ship in the fleet to handle.)

Then I did a thing which nobody does here without a searchlight—ran at night. You see the ship was delayed 1½ days at Kyankingaung awaiting my arrival,

and on reading my 'sailing orders' I was told to get back at a certain date.

I had taken copious notes on the way up and the ship's pilot is an old Lascar who has been in her for many years. So, between us, both with our necks craned forward, we crept for nearly 2 hours in inky darkness with no sound other than the leadsmans' reports, and the swish of the current, and at last the black shape of the Whirlpool hill loomed up and then it was a case of double full speed and dash for the entrance.

After all this I was cheerfully informed on arrival here that it was quite unnecessary, and that except for my having wired they would not have expected me for 2 days at least! I'll know another time though. My anxieties have given me confidence anyhow.

He was careful to institute a new system for training his crew in the routine of fire-stations and the like, by explaining to them the reason as well as the method of their drill.

I am pretty busy making out a completely new routine for fire, boat, collision and other Stations aboard here. I had to do the same on the *Sladen* and so am well up in it. In both ships the whole routine seems to have been run on an obsolete system. What I want is to get the various numbers to think *why* they are doing so and so. Once they grasp the object there should be no difficulty. Stations were in excellent swing when I left the *Sladen* just through a system with clear explanation. I have seen men point a hose at an imaginary fire without any regard as to whether it was connected to one of the pumps or not, and the first time I gave 'collision stations' here, they actually put the suction hoses *over* the side and started pumping more water into the ship. It seemed to strike them suddenly as a good idea, when I explained that in the event of a collision, the object, unlike that of a fire, was to get the water *out of* the ship.

Meanwhile he was daily expecting the arrival of his relief and speculating who it should prove to

be. But to his delight his week's temporary command ran on into another, and then another, till on August 10 he wrote :

I may get a few weeks' grace yet. But they *ought* to send a man at once to get the necessary experience while the river is full. When it starts to go down in October and November is the most dangerous time, the new channels being only in a state of formation.

The weeks slipped into months, and he continued to ply his craft back and forth between Mandalay and Bhamo with Government troops or transport at such speed that he became known as the 'Comet.' The *Bhamo* was due to be docked (provisionally) in October, in which month he was also due for the second part of his language exam., so that his command could hardly be prolonged beyond that month.

In spite of vigorous exercise ashore (cycling, rowing, swimming, boxing, and occasionally trying to get his 'sea-legs on horseback'), and rigorous dieting (cutting out all starches, sweets and fats), he could not reduce his weight which remained at 12 stone—his height was 5 feet 4 inches : 'I suppose it is the result of a contented mind or something, yet it *is* rather disconcerting.' And despite heat and the ravages of mosquitoes he never got a touch of malaria : his constitution seemed impervious to any ailment—'I have more energy than I know what to do with'—and his inability to handle a racquet skilfully was explained by his being muscle-bound.

The current of the Irrawaddy in its upper reaches between Katha and Bhamo is very swift, and the whole river rises with great rapidity from June to

September when it is in a perpetual swirl of violent eddies and whirlpools. Then the waters begin to subside, leaving a network of creeks and shallows which take time to settle into channels, separated by mudbanks and sandy islands, and in places rocks. At the best of times the navigation of such a river must require considerable skill. Bowers listened with scant appreciation to the 'exploits' of those of his fellows who boasted of having 'charged native villages, and knocked down houses on the banks.'

In August he received instructions to take Captain Kendall, the Military Transport Officer, on an official visit up-stream from Katha. He was already on friendly terms with this officer, who had won Bowers' admiration by his efficiency and refusal to wear his decorations except when on parade. But, as he rightly guessed, the M.T.O.'s reports would include a confidential one on the acting-commander's handling of the *Bhamo*, and with this in mind he had sought permission, but in vain, to 'try experiments' with his craft 'in some tricky places I know of, and twist her about there, to find out how she goes astern when making a "stern board" or "backwards circle."' '

The cruise, however, proved most successful without need for such manœuvres, and included a shooting trip with his highly pleased passenger. He returned to Mandalay to find that he had satisfied the examiner with his second attempt at Part I. of the Language examination (Lower Standard), having scored 85 per cent ; and a few days later learned to his surprised delight that he was 'a fixture' on the *Bhamo* till the end of the year.

My friends in Bombay are so astounded at my good luck that Goad very kindly—to relieve their feelings, and mine—asked the Assistant Director how long I was going to be here. The answer was ‘In all probability till after the Viceroy’s tour in December’ which means, I think, I should finish the year in the good old craft.

But his home-mail had brought him, on September 6, enclosures which turned his thoughts entirely elsewhere—these were newspaper accounts of the *Nimrod’s* departure for the Antarctic: and he wrote—

Ever since I went within 3° of the Antarctic Circle and looked due South I have thought—as I thought then—that’s my mark! the Southern Continent. Reading Capt. Scott’s two books on the *Discovery* Expedition made me as keen as mustard. Perhaps my chance will come later.

It is the first reference in his letters to the goal on which his heart was set, the attainment of which was to cost him his life. The expression of such enthusiasm must have caused his people some alarm—to judge by his reply to a letter from his sister, which is written with quite unusual heat.

You started with ‘nothing to say’ and said a good deal, some of which I appreciate, and some not. What I did *not* agree with I will ‘out’ at once, and that is what you say about ‘foolhardy and vainglorious Polar Expeditions.’ . . . How can anyone in conjecture say it will be of no use to mankind to penetrate North or South to the Pole? . . . Besides, apart from all the magnetic or meteorological interest, is it nothing to a nation to produce men willing to undergo hardships and privation with practically no gain to themselves? . . . Perhaps I have spoken at length on a subject I am rather strong on. I hope you will forgive me.

He was looking forward to the advent of the cool weather—

when the water, fed by the mountain snows, becomes icy. That's the time to live, and the very thought of it keeps me going. . . . The only thing I like about Mandalay is when I plunge into the cool water and wish I was a fish. I feel so at home in it that sinking seems impossible. How everybody cannot swim defeats me. I really cannot sink. I have often tried to, but am always on the top again directly. . . . Everything in your letter savours of cool weather, and nice biting breezes, the very thought of them is like a breath of life to me.

His cruises up the river were giving him more and more confidence in this type of navigation. On one occasion he went aboard a cargo-boat in order to reprimand its skipper for having against all the rules attempted to turn across his bow in a racing current at the imminent risk of a smash, which Bowers could avert only by taking another risk—double full steam ahead, and a sharp turn of the wheel—thereby avoiding the collision but by inches. On another occasion he moored his boat independently of the Harbour-Master. This was when he went down to Rangoon, for the first time since his appointment, for the purpose of going by rail to Maymyo to take Part II of his Hindustani examination. The incident provides a good illustration of the character of the *Bhamo* generally.

Rangoon, 5 Oct., '07. She is as long as the *Sladen*, with her funnel at the correct cant, and everything just so. There is no doubt that for river work, she is just the thing, sound, fairly fast, light and not so very hard to handle if you use your intelligence, and take wind, current, etc., into consideration. Of course if you try to swing her against wind and tide and other drawbacks, like a big, heavy ship, you must expect your results. But I

had no idea she had such a reputation. The Harbour-Masters here are in no end of a funk of her. When I arrived I dashed right thro' the harbour, full speed—as then you have full control of her—and took up my moorings without any assistance.

When I reported myself to Capt. Hooper, he said 'What! don't you know the rules?'

I remarked that Harbour-Masters were no good in the *Bhamo*, but according to rules I had had to take one to shift up to Keighley Street Wharf—the one we lay in, on the ill-fated day in the *Sladen*. He was in quite a funk, and said 'I have heard this ship is a bit difficult, dare I go astern?'

I said 'If you want to turn her round you can—otherwise don't.' He took an awful time getting us alongside, greatly to the amusement of all hands who were not used to seeing the *Bhamo* treated like a Battleship. I was only there a day, and left this morning for the Station-ship Buoy, which the *Dalhousie* vacated yesterday. If the other chap had been in a funk, this one was much worse, he could not get me away from the wharf, and after about an hour's struggling he got the anchor up, and we were immediately set down again. I remarked that he had better drop her alongside again to save a mess—which he did. We got away finally, after a struggle, and at this end, missed our buoy, and I ordered the anchor to be let go at once. As it was, we were drifted down on to a fleet of native boats.

I got a line out to the buoy, and finally fixed her off. The Harbour-Master said 'She's simply unmanageable, I will never shift her again, if there is any wind at all.'

I laughed, and said I would do it all right if he liked. Because I say this don't think I thought myself any more of a seaman than he is. He, of course, is used only to handling big ships, probably I would be just as bad as he, were we to change places.

I only relate it as an instance of the general awe with which the *Bhamo* is looked upon.

From Rangoon he gazed wistfully upon the 'blue,' his rightful home, and smelt the sea-borne wind, and envisaged with small pleasure a railway

journey of 800 miles at a cost of 100 rupees, with the prospect of being refunded no more than 80, and then only if he passed. He wrote to his sister from the train on his return—

From Maymyo to Rangoon. *Oct. 15, '07.* A vast cultivated plain, as flat as a billiard table, 2 ranges of wooded hills far off on the East beam. A noonday sun shining down as only an Indian sun knows how to shine, and not a breath of wind. In a carriage, all by himself, gasping what air he can, and contemplating the fact that he hasn't 1 pice left with which to get a cool soda, sits your beloved brother.

I left my ship safely moored with a page of instructions numbered I to XII in my order book for Mr. Busher—the Gunner—to carry on during my absence. That was on Saturday afternoon. As I went over the gangway he said: 'I hope you will pass, sir!' I remarked that if I did not it would be a bad look-out for him and everybody else aboard for the next fortnight.

That night I dined at Pegu, had a horrible night in the train afterwards, scarcely sleeping at all. As we mounted the hills, the air got cooler and cooler, till in Mayoung you might almost have imagined it was summer at home.

Late that night, I drove to the Circuit House, but the Keeper was doubtful about giving me admittance, not being in uniform. He brought me a board for inspection, which gave a list of entitled inmates. It started with the Lieut.-Governor and among others were all British Officers on duty. I sternly upbraided the man for not recognizing me as a B.O. on duty, though there was plenty of excuse for his mistake as nobody is too clean after a long train journey.

The icy cold bath was what I enjoyed. I felt I could have stayed there all night. The next day I girded on my sword and joined a party of officers outside the Brigade Office, the examination being held in the Court-Martial room. The President of the Board appeared in no hurry and gave us all a good doing.

I had a huge Punjaubi Artillery man to speak to. He was a jolly good chap, and spoke so clearly and distinctly,

that it was impossible to mistake anything. He asked me questions and petitioned for leave, etc., and then I was told a number of questions to ask him. We both understood each other, so after about 15 minutes, the President said that would do for me, so I departed treading on air.

He resumed command of the *Bhamo* on returning to Rangoon, and took her up again to Mandalay. Preparations for the Viceroy's trip were in full swing, and telegrams of instructions arrived daily from Simla 'with such trivial items as procuring fresh cream, etc., at odd stations. I wonder if H.E. has the least idea of all this bundobast, and causing all this fuss over a month's trip!'

Now he was trying though with much reluctance to accustom himself to the prospect of 'reverting' after relinquishing his command.

I cannot expect to remain here after January, as I see 3 Lieutenants come out from leave simultaneously. Still I must not growl, it will have been 7 months before my tenure of blissfulness ends, which for a Sub. is so unheard of that I am looked on as something of a curio. I think Henley [Commander of the *Sladen*] must have laid on the jam on my behalf when he saw the Director in Bombay, and Kendall too has been more than kind. . . . The rows H. and I had were the order of the day and — used to shake his head and say 'You'll come a cropper!' Probably if H. had been anything less than an absolute Sahib, I should have.

He felt more acutely than ever the conflict in himself between his irrepressible ambition which the race for competition in the Service whetted to a keen edge, and the deeper feeling that such ambitions were selfish at root and therefore morally wrong. He well knew that 'to climb down a peg or two' would be best for his soul's health, but

only with the utmost difficulty could he bring himself to face it. He sums up the situation thus :

My present object is to stand, be as upright as possible under modern circumstances, overcome myself (a very hard job), and become a thorough master of my profession. Nobody in this round world knows their individual weakness better than themselves ; but I realize that I still have some unrecognized even by myself. . . . At present I am called to be a sailor, and as such I must remain till I am shown unmistakably that the time has come for me to do something else.

His last days in Mandalay were spent in a riot of State functions and festivities, due to the arrival of the Viceroy (Lord Minto), and his party : a Durbar in the Old Palace, a Reception at Government House, and the annual St. Andrew's dinner, on November 30. Not till then did he learn from his father's old friend, Sir Herbert Thyrtle-White, that it was at his special request that he had been given extended command of the *Bhamo*.

At the St. Andrew's dinner—

I found the *only* drink permissible was whisky—sodas were allowed under protest. Everybody started with whisky neat in liqueur glasses. I can do a good deal, but I cannot tackle whisky, so I secured a small bottle of hock, which is the same colour—and hid it among a bunch of flowers and thereby passed as a Scotsman !

I was told my being in a ship called the *Bhamo* was a curious coincidence as father was very keen on it, and used to name everything he could 'Bhamo' at one time. And that a horse of father's named 'Bhamo' won the Rangoon Derby on one occasion.

On his innocently inquiring why his father had not entered the Irrawaddy flotilla, he was answered :

'Captain Bowers enter the flotilla ! Why, if he had done anything with flotillas it would have been to run

one of his own !' They told me that Father when quite a young man was in absolute charge of the Government Dock-yard at Dalla ; and that by the men of his day he was considered as one of the pioneers of British influence and commerce in Burmah and the Straits. . . .

At length came the day—February 12, '08—when he must cease to 'paddle his own canoe,' and hand over his command at Kyankingong, the port where he had first obtained it eight months before. Thence he proceeded to Rangoon to join the *Minto* as navigating officer with the best resolutions he could muster to stifle regret.

But his term of service on the *Minto* was both briefer and more pleasant than he had expected—more pleasant, since his ways were on the sea once more, coasting and sounding from Akyab down the whole length of the Malay Peninsula, and among the islands where his father had been ; since too, though he had to 'knuckle under,' it was not 'to take orders from some incompetent beggar whom I could instruct,' but from a Commander whom he could respect, and who was neither soft nor slack—defects which in Bowers' eyes were almost worse than criminal—'Keen as mustard himself, and requiring equal keenness from his subordinates.' Pleasant too because 'my duties are many. All the instruments—chronometers, compasses, leads, logs, their gear and their continual nursing are in my hands, and all the books and charts.' Pleasant too, for the opportunities it gave him to bathe in good sea water among the coral reefs.

Rangoon. *March 7, '08.* As regards bathing, I have not forgotten my promise and don't take risks. These places are pools in the reefs, so clear that you can see down 15 or 20 feet like bluey glass. No shark could get into

them, or if he did would be seen at a glance. One of my favourite dodges is to dive down, catch hold of a rock or chunk of coral, and sit or lie there with my eyes open as long as I can hold breath. It is simply ripping. The clear water above, with the sunlight on the top and the greeny rocks. It is also possible to see quite a little distance, and take a momentary glance at crabs and tropical fish of all colours. . . .

Another Sub. always bathes with me and we have great competitions in bringing up specimens of the bottom from considerable depths. When we meet it is almost irresistible to laugh, and then you at once dissolve into a cloud of bubbles and make for the surface. . . .

We stopped at Oyster Island, where I had a glorious swim, and spent an hour or more, chipping oysters off the rocks, which were sent aboard for dinner in triumph ! Still I cannot eat them off the rocks—Ugh ! they wriggle in your mouth ! The only way I like them is fried in bread-crumbs.

Moreover, this cruise was not without its excitements. On February 24 when on the look-out for the beacon which indicates the reef of Oyster Island, he sighted a large tramp steamer flying signals of distress. She proved to be the S.S. *Ivydene* of Newcastle. The *Minto* anchored as near her as possible in a difficult sea, and sent boat-loads of coolies to assist in jettisoning her cargo of rice. It was then decided that an attempt should be made to tow her off the reef.

For some reason they left the job entirely to me, so I was running the crew and coolies as well as my own people. . . . She was so much lightened, that the wash started swinging her tremendously ; each grind was a dull sickening jerk, and made it obvious that a little sea would be sufficient to do for her. At last we started. I mounted the bridge of the *Ivydene* and Captain Huddleston of the *Wanderer* took the lines, and we went full astern, and he went full ahead, and our boats stood by

in case she would sink like a brick. For about half an hour we continued this without result, when she gave a horrible jerk which seemed as if her bottom was ripped off, and slid off the rocks. I told the Captain—‘hard on starboard,’ and we found no steam in the steering engine. She all but dashed her stern into the rocks as she swung off. At last by dint of much yelling I got the steam on and steered her. The fore-hold and fore-peak filled with a gulp, but no. 2 hold did not. I piloted her out somehow—she hit nothing else, and decided to make a dash for Akyab. To my great disgust, however, Captain Huddleston came aboard and took charge, so off we went with *Minto* astern, in case we went down. A most curious sensation it was being on a ship which you knew might go down any minute. It was like running the gauntlet in a nightmare, impossible to go fast, and yet knowing the danger every minute outside port meant. To make a long story short we got in safely. I piloted her into harbour, and when she had been anchored safely got my party back aboard the *Minto* after dark, feeling we had done a good day’s work and saved £50,000. . . . She is going to be fixed up temporarily at Akyab and then going to Calcutta for a new bottom forward.

A few weeks after this adventure he had entered for and creditably passed his third examination in Hindustani (Higher Standard). This was a qualification ordinarily required for promotion from the rank of Lieutenant. In respect of this qualification Bowers had therefore elected to qualify several months in advance, a course almost unique. But he had looked upon it as an ugly fence to be taken in his stride, and the sooner the better. Once crossed he vowed never to learn another language: he was a mathematician by choice and aptitude, he was no linguist. When taken to task by his sister for his habit of writing across the page at the end of his letters, and thereby making them sometimes almost indecipherable, he

had answered, 'I always consoled myself for my linguistic disqualifications by saying to myself, "Well, Bowers, you can at least write English!"—take that away, and I have no qualifications left.'

On April 16, a wholly unexpected letter arrived from the Director at Bombay to the Captain of the *Minto*.

Sub-Lieut. H. R. Bowers is to be informed that, although he has not sufficient pension service to admit of his proceeding on 12 months' leave, he is at liberty to avail himself of 8 months if he wishes to.

After consulting with the Captain he replied that 'Sub-Lieut. H. R. Bowers will be pleased to avail himself of 8 months' leave out of India from such date as his services can be spared.' A month later came the reply :

Sub-Lieut. H. R. Bowers of the vessel under your command is permitted to proceed on 8 months' leave on Private Affairs from such date as he wishes to avail himself of it.

On receipt of this intelligence he wrote home : 'Sub-Lieut. H. R. Bowers has thought a deep think, and has decided not to leave till the *end* of the month, so that he will have Christmas and New Year at home—besides having a fortnight to gloat over the fact that he is going on leave. . . . Some of the subs. who were out a year before me will not get leave till after I come back. Still they cannot say much, as no sub. has ever had H.S. [Higher Standard] after his name before !'

His 'luck' had held.

On embarking at Rangoon on the *Pentakota* at the end of May he wrote :

Rangoon to Madras. *May 31, '08.* I was tempted to

reveal myself to the Marine Superintendent here, and would certainly have got some concessions as the son of Captain Bowers—but I could not bring myself to do it.

He saw me on the day of my departure and said, 'I hear that you are off in the *Pentakota*.' I said 'yes.' He said 'Well! had I known you were an R.I.M. officer I would have arranged a 1st class berth for you—all full up now.' Then he added—'By the bye, are you any relation to Captain Bowers?' I said I was his son. 'Well! if I had only known that before.' He hustled off to the Chief of the Embarkation Dept., but it was too late, all I. and II. berths were full, and I was one in a berth of 4.

His next letter to his mother was from Charing Cross, when he beguiled a few hours, pending his appointment to report arrival, in the unaccustomed delight of prowling round shops, but longing for nothing so much as 'homecoming, and the sight of your dear face.'

CHAPTER VIII

His Last Leave

. . . Whether we be young or old,
 Our destiny, our being's heart and home,
 Is with infinitude, and only there ;
 With hope it is, hope that can never die,
 Effort, and expectation, and desire,
 And something evermore about to be.

WORDSWORTH.

SALT water was Bowers' element whether on it or in it, and the brine of it was in his veins. 'That's what I like about the sea—there is always variety,' he had written home from his first voyage ; and again from the Bay of Bengal, 'I have an insatiable desire for motion.' In the ocean's boundlessness his spirit found release, against its restlessness he matched his own, it fulfilled his being. From boyhood he had tried for his mother's sake to resist its pull, but in vain, for he knew himself to be native to its waves, free of its wide dominion. Yet there was another pull which, when at sea, was even stronger. He was a bird of passage, but he was equally (perhaps by virtue of the very force of the contrast) a home-bird ; so much so that when this, his last full leave, was spent he could write with perfect sincerity from the troopship *en route* to India, 'The best of times

at sea are after all mere existence compared with being at home.'

Caerlaverock was always full of laughter when he was in it. His gaiety was infectious and its effect was tonic. Entertainments, parties, picnics—he was the life and soul of these, but to see Bowers at his best one had to be free of the hospitality of his home. His merriment was not of the riotous or boisterous kind, but the natural exuberance of a soul in love with life. His high spirits were irrepressible, and he had a rare gift for seeing the comic side of situations. No one ever saw him depressed ; his incurable optimism was the expression of an inner joy. No doubt his robust health had much to do with this, but so also had the deliberate cultivation of an outlook and attitude to life which rendered him impervious to depression. 'I hope,' he wrote to a friend, 'that your horizon is bright : remember, if it is not, you must not look outside you for the cause, but inside (at least that is my experience).'

He possessed to a high degree that combination of vitality and unselfishness which is the secret of personal magnetism ; his friends were many, and he had no enemies. But he was careful in the choice of his closest friends, and careful too to keep his friendships in repair. He preferred for his companions men of character, and it is noticeable that those who got closest to him were of the quiet kind. In the South it was the society of 'the peace-loving members of our party' that pleased him most : Wilson and Cherry-Garrard, Oates and Atkinson—all were quiet men and two of them to the point of taciturnity. But his best friends

throughout his life were his mother and his sisters : he wanted no other company.

Every morning before breakfast he went for a long swim in the Clyde, accompanied until Christmas by his younger sister and a friend. He astonished the hardiest bathers by his powers of endurance and immunity to cold. He continued alone till the end of December when his leave was up, and thought nothing of swimming from Ardbeg Point to Craigmore Pier and back in the dark of a winter's morning. Returning home to breakfast in a glow of warmth, he would request everybody to 'feel' him in proof of the fact.

Physical fitness was a passion with him, and though his weight was excessive for his height he had not an ounce of superfluous flesh. He was a non-smoker, and, except when etiquette required toasts, drank nothing but water. Of this he drank quantities from a jug that stood on the sideboard remarking between gulps, 'There's no drink like it!' When not otherwise occupied indoors he would be found exercising with dumb-bells or swinging Indian clubs. And always it seemed to those nearest him that he was silently equipping himself for some great test that was to call out the fullness of his powers.

At a party to which he was invited one of the guests professed to read hands. When Bowers presented his for inspection, the lady having glanced at it said, 'I am afraid I have nothing to tell you.' 'Oh, but I don't mind,' he protested, 'tell me anything you like.' The reply was : 'Well, if you really must know, there is nothing more to tell. I don't know how it is that you are

here at all.' Bowers related this as a great joke ; but she was out of her reckoning by just four years.

In spite of his light-heartedness he gave the impression, both in looks and in manner, of being a good deal older than his years. It seemed impossible to tire him, and he was never perfectly content unless strenuously occupied in work or play. It was the simple pleasures that pleased him most : scouring the moorlands afoot with a congenial companion ; or scrambling for miles over the rocks that abut on the Kyles ; or splashing in the lough with stalwart arms. The friend who accompanied him most often on his rambles remembers an occasion in the early winter when ' he went daft for joy ' at the unexpected sight and feel of snow on the high ground of that mild western island. He seldom went farther afield, but on a visit to Fort William he climbed Ben Nevis three times in a week. On the edge of the summit there is a ' pulpit ' built over a 3,000-foot precipice for the benefit of those who wish to view the depths with safety. To the consternation of his companion Bowers performed gymnastics on this dangerous place, and then swarmed up the flag-pole so as to be, past doubt, ' the highest person in Great Britain.'

He could never attain the same excellence in any field-sport as in the water. But he tried hard, and with his sister, one of the best lady players in the Island, entered for the Tennis Tournament, and by dogged perseverance rather than by any aptitude for the game helped her to win the mixed doubles.

He loved the time-honoured ways, the old traditional hospitalities. Of these the epitome for

him was the Christmas season. The verses that he wrote on the *Loch Torridon* as well as the many references in his letters to this festival show how he treasured its memory and how he wished himself at home to share its festivities. He had spent so many Christmases at sea or in tropical climates that when this last Christmas which he had planned to make the climax to his leave was come, he made the most of it. He filled his home with all the evergreens it could carry, and the joy of household decorations fired him with such ardour that, when they were finished, he must needs go and assist in decorating the houses of his friends.

For work, besides the several studies connected with his profession, every detail of which he set himself to master, he had other out-of-the-way interests and pursuits, such as biblical history, and the architecture of the Great Pyramid. It was one of his great ambitions to visit this monument, which interested him not only because of the relation of its measurements to the earth's circumference but also because of its alleged bearing on Old Testament prophecy. He thought he could trace an intimate connexion between history and physical geography and the working out of this study quite engrossed him.

Another study which he pursued with equal zest not only for its practical value on the sea but also for its fascination to him was astronomy. There is little doubt that, had he had the time, his mathematical aptitude together with his interest in the subject would have made him a proficient astronomer. His sister remembers how on their walks at night he would sometimes stand and tell over the

names and distances of the stars for her edification, till she (a little impatient of the cold perhaps) would suggest movement, whereupon he with a jolly laugh would say, 'You've not been listening. Now we'll go *all* through them again!'

But some lines that he wrote in 1904, for all their immaturity, suggest how seriously he considered the heavens as the work of the fingers of God.

Lord, help my finite mind, that I may see
Thee in Thy infinite infinity ;
As from this trackless sea on which I roam
I upwards look to Thy celestial dome
Which, with its myriad stars in bright array
Each one pursuing his own trackless way,
Unto earth-fettered minds doth aye appear
As though one vast confusion reigneth there.
But, when with thoughts released we heavenward gaze,
And meditate upon their devious ways
We see that chaos though apparent still
But hides the workings of Thy wond'rous will.
How then can we—with earthly learning small—
Conceive the mighty purport of it all ?

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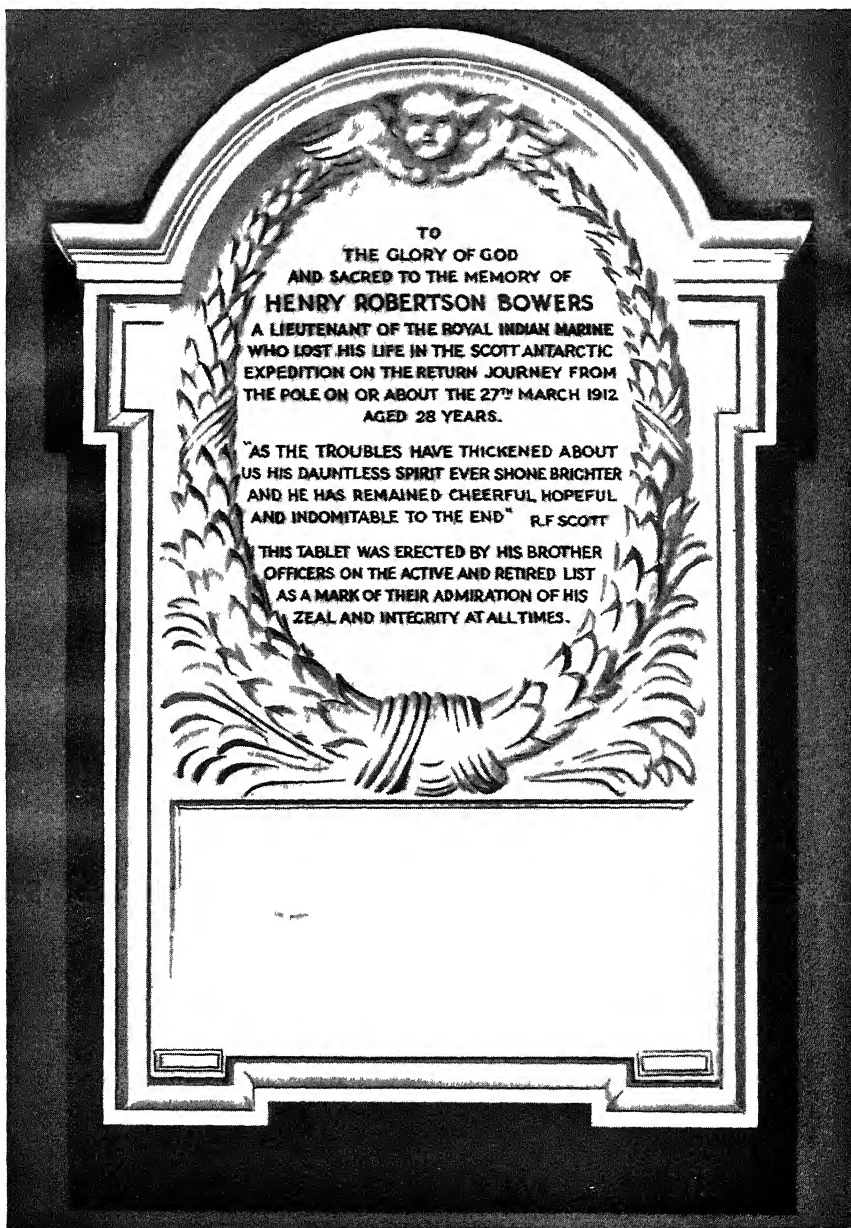
I yet believe that focus unsurpassed
Governs the ways of all ellipses vast,
And countless suns their devious tracks traverse
Round the Great Centre of the Universe.
Where then, O Thou Almighty, canst Thou be ?
Whose presence permeates eternity—
All the great Universe, which Thou did'st make
Out of Thy Love, and for Thy pleasure's sake.
Surely with perfect reverence we can say
That at the Centre, Thou must be alway.
There in its boundless and its vast unknown
I see by faith the likeness of Thy Throne.
Where, hid by dazzling rays, transcendent bright
Author Supreme, combining Love and Light,
Amber beneath Thee, round, a Circle true
Forming the spectral shades of every hue.

He had a great regard for any clergyman who sincerely lived up to his convictions, and especially for old Mr. Dewar of St. Ninian's Church which he regularly attended with his family. The parish included the little island of Inchmarnock and on one occasion when the pastor received a call to go there in rough weather, Bowers helped to row him across the turbulent strait when no one else would go.

For all his rigorous self-discipline, asceticism as such had no appeal to him. He was vastly amused on hearing a sermon in which it was explained that St. Paul's admonition to 'buffet his body and bring it into subjection' really meant to 'beat it black and blue,' and wrote home afterwards :

It is so easy to picture that ponderous cleric (old Black-and-Blue) exhorting us to do what he probably intended to avoid doing himself. . . . Private and obscure individuals are often nearer Christ in their *lives* (and only when necessary in their *words*) than many eminent preachers.

Next to his family his oldest and best friend ashore was Mr. James Paul of Glasgow, who has remarked, 'Henry's abiding faith was that everything worked out to the ultimate good of those who persevered.' This is the succinct expression of his practical philosophy of life. Both in the pursuit of his ambitions and in the execution of the duties which they demanded of him when realized, he was nothing if not persevering. He worked hard and shrewdly to secure whatever promotion came within his reach : from boyhood he had taken life and its demands on trust, regarding every 'chance' as a heaven-sent opportunity ; and thus in shaping his own course and carving out his own career believed that he was acting under the



TO
THE GLORY OF GOD
AND SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF
HENRY ROBERTSON BOWERS
A LIEUTENANT OF THE ROYAL INDIAN MARINE
WHO LOST HIS LIFE IN THE SCOTT ANTARCTIC
EXPEDITION ON THE RETURN JOURNEY FROM
THE POLE ON OR ABOUT THE 27TH MARCH 1912
AGED 28 YEARS.

"AS THE TROUBLES HAVE THICKENED ABOUT
US HIS DAUNTLESS SPIRIT EVER SHONE BRIGHTER
AND HE HAS REMAINED CHEERFUL HOPEFUL
AND INDOMITABLE TO THE END" R.F. SCOTT

THIS TABLET WAS ERECTED BY HIS BROTHER
OFFICERS ON THE ACTIVE AND RETIRED LIST
AS A MARK OF THEIR ADMIRATION OF HIS
ZEAL AND INTEGRITY AT ALL TIMES.

MEMORIAL IN ST NINIAN'S CHURCH, RO'RHESAY

orders of an unseen Commander. When the advancement came it seemed to him to be providential : ' I always think,' he wrote to his friend James Paul, ' that big changes are ordered for us.'

And in the execution of his duties no less, he held fast by the same principle. He would say that man is called upon to do his utmost, go to the limit of his capacity and endurance in whatever task he has been called upon to undertake, and when the last limit is reached and human effort is exhausted help will come from a supernatural source. He would press the adage ' God helps those who help themselves ' to its logical conclusion—' Man's extremity is God's opportunity.'

It would seem that life's bitter experience, which his own experience was to confirm so tragically, gives the lie to this heroic optimism. It would seem that the verdict of history, with its long record of frustrated hopes, lost causes, and cruel disillusion, would write it down as a pathetic fallacy ; that, judged at least from the viewpoint of material welfare and prosperity, suffering and defeat may be most often the reward of faith and perseverance.

But perhaps ' the ultimate good ' may be something other than human aspiration can conceive. It may be that in the long run material success spells spiritual failure, and conversely that there is a heaven past imagining for those who have truly and nobly failed on earth. Something of this may have been in Bowers' mind when he wrote : ' I do not anticipate or even desire rest here. . . . I am quite sure that all will realize the consummation of their entirely different and diverse hopes, once on the Other Side.'

CHAPTER IX

The Persian Gulf

Travel.—Thou wilt find a friend in the place of him thou leavest ; and fatigue thyself ; for by labour are the sweets of life obtained.

To a man of intelligence and education there is no glory in a constant residence ; therefore quit thy native place and go abroad.

I have observed that the stagnation of water corrupteth it ; if it floweth, it becometh sweet ; but otherwise it doth not.

The Arabian Nights.

AMONGST his letters in the saloon of H.M. Transport *Rohilla* was a parting gift from his sister, a collar-bag which she had worked for him ; and he wrote from Southampton Water : ‘ I am sure everyone who sees it will at once conclude that I have a “ girl,” who thinks more of me than I deserve. Well, I have someone who is just as good as a girl of my own.’ He was still heart-free as well as heart-whole, and if the company of other fellows’ sisters had sometimes caused it a mild flutter, none had ever taken the place it still held for his own. To his mother he wrote from the Malabar coast confessing to feelings of homesickness, and reproaching himself for the late breakfasts caused by his morning swim, ‘ always so upsetting from a household point of view.’

On arrival in Bombay he joined the *Dufferin* for

the second time, and on February 5 was again in Rangoon River after a stormy passage.

As usual we got a bit of a dusting in the Gulf of Manaar. . . . When we passed Cochin I took a long look at it, remembering you were there with Father. . . . What a crowd of recollections for me hang around Burma, and its great port! Although I have no love for Rangoon itself, I could not help feeling a little responsive just now as I spotted Syriam and the Shwe Dagon Pagodas glittering in the sun, to say nothing of the ruined Davot Pagoda at the mouth of the Bassein Creek—the gate of the Irrawaddy! So well do I know this river now—every house almost, and even every tree. . . .

But he was not allowed to remain long in these well-remembered waters, for on March 4 he was back again in Bombay, whence he wrote with the momentous news that 'Sir G. Warrender, Rear-Admiral R.N., has approved of the Directors' appointment of Lieut. Bowers to H.M.S. *Fox* for 6 months. Isn't it splendid? Of course I am considered the luckiest chap going.'

In his next letter (from Karachi to Muscat) he tells his mother ingenuously that at this time of the year the Persian Gulf is really considered 'quite cold: it doesn't stoke up till April, when it does so thoroughly.' On March 17 he wrote from H.M.S. *Fox*, East India Station, in the Gulf of Oman, after three days in the ship.

As we rounded one of the huge bare cliffs of Muscat harbour we suddenly came upon the wily *Fox* lying in a cove, so completely shut in from all, except one, direction that we were only a few ship's lengths of her when spotted. She had arrived only a couple of hours before us, having run across Jashk for her mails. It was very fortunate for me. . . .

Everybody aboard is much enamoured of the Captain,

Allan T. Hunt. He is a tall thin man, bearded, with a long straight nose and a full-rigged uncynical smile. (*Later.*) The Captain is a ripper, and enters into everything we do. He comes and boxes with us on the Quarter Deck and also does fencing and bayonet practice. . . . We are in a part of the world as unlike the Clyde as it is possible to imagine. Hills there are certainly, but absolutely bare and sun-baked. You must not suppose, however, that we are at present in a similar condition. The weather is remarkably cool, not to say chilly in the early morning, and one is always glad of a blanket sleeping on deck. July, August and September are supposed to be insupportable and all ships except ours and the three R.N. gunboats manned by lascars are withdrawn. . . . The *Fox* has never entered the straits north of the Gulf of Oman. We are not in *the* Gulf, i.e. the Persian Gulf.

But another surprise awaited him. Two days later the *Fox* was in the Persian Gulf, chasing dhows.

To explain the presence of a battle-cruiser on its lawful occasions in the Gulf in 1909 it is necessary to recapitulate briefly an almost forgotten chapter of British foreign policy.¹

In 1881 England had guaranteed to the Amir the independence of Afghanistan. To assist him to maintain it she had further agreed to supply him with arms and ammunition from India at a reasonable price. Some years later, however, the Amir sought to economize by establishing his own factory at Kabul for the manufacture of black powder ammunition and a firearm of inferior calibre.

¹ The summary that follows is based upon a fuller account in *H.M.S. 'Fox' in the East Indies 1908-1910*, by A. H. Shirley, printed by the Oxford University Press in 1910 for private circulation.

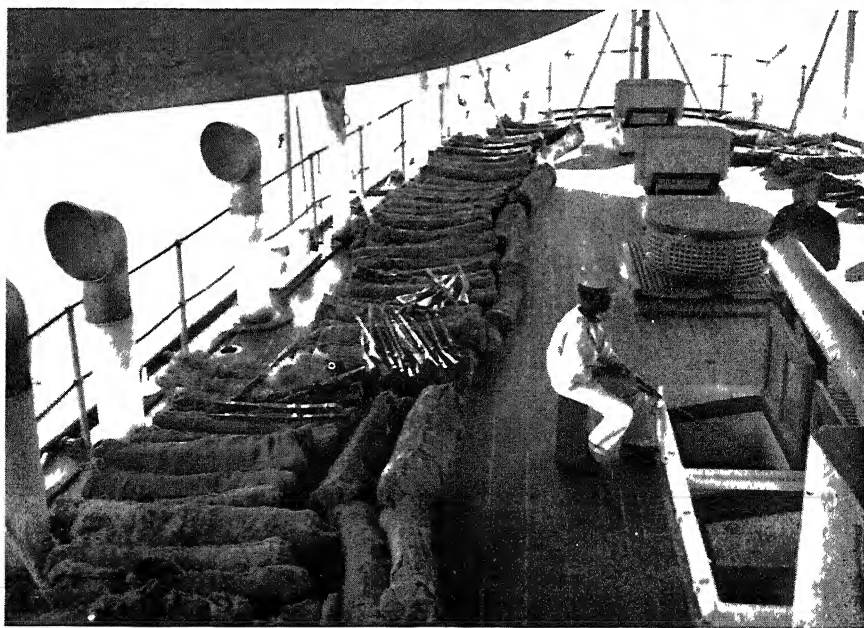
With these he not only armed his own troops but also traded them to the tribes on the frontier. But a rifle is a dangerous toy to put into the hands of a Border chief who may easily become a Border thief, and raids across the Indian frontier became so common as to constitute a serious menace to Afghanistan itself. The Indian Government forbade the further supply of arms to the Amir, who for his part discontinued trade with the frontier tribes. The type of weapon manufactured at Kābul had in any case become obsolete soon after the factory was opened. But the temporary supply had fostered a permanent demand ; both Amir and tribesmen must henceforth get firearms somewhere, somehow. There was only one source and only one method. The source was Muscat, capital of the state of Oman, to the Sultan of which France in 1864 had guaranteed independence together with permission to export arms. The method was by transport in the Sultan's fleet of fast-sailing dhows, cruising within the four-mile limit along the coast of Oman, through the Straits of Lima, across the Persian Gulf, and thence by camel along the caravan-routes to the interior of Afghanistan.

The Sultan had previously indulged in the amusement of piracy in the Gulf for some years, and welcomed the opportunity of gun-running as an additional source of revenue. At the request of the British Government however in 1898 he discreetly prohibited the export of arms to Persia and the Indian frontier, at the same time authorizing the British to seize any dhows engaged in this traffic in his own waters ; but it was an enactment more honoured in the breach than in the observance.

In the winter of 1908-9 the International Arms Traffic Convention met at Brussels. Any agreement on the illicit trade from Muscat was rendered nugatory by France's refusal to annul her treaty with the Sultan. Hence the decision of the British Government to take independent action, and the presence of H.M.S. *Fox* (twin-screw cruiser, second class) on special service in the Gulf in March 1909 ; from which point Bowers' narrative can be resumed.

Bundar Abbas, *March 20, '09*. Here we are really in the Persian Gulf,—the first time for most of us in the *Fox*. Since leaving Muscat we have been trying very hard to catch dhows running arms. Just before I joined 2 were caught—one only 2 days previous to my joining. It was a very large one, with over a 1000 rifles and many thousand rounds of ammunition aboard. The 1st Lt. caught her in the steam cutter and had to use the Maxim as assistance was threatened from the shore.

If you will look at a map of these waters, you will see how the country is situated with reference to India. On the Oman or Arabian side we can do nothing. Any Dhow can be full of arms provided she keeps within the 4-mile limit, outside that we can nab her. These Dhows all come via Muscat, some from as far as Aden. At Muscat they get the latest news of the movements of Government ships and cut their cloth accordingly. The usual plan is to work up coast along the narrow promontory and cut a dash across the Ormuz Strait at its narrowest part. There is no doubt that dozens get through during the season and are at once unloaded and taken by caravans to Afghanistan and Baluchistan. Our *modus operandi* is to keep out of sight during the day and slip in without lights and everything darkened at night—drop 3 or 4 boats at intervals of 10 miles or so along a likely piece of coastline and then depart. In the day we cruise about and chase every sail we see, make them heave to and examine them. Several with only small quantities of arms and ammunitions aboard simply throw them over the side as the ship approaches and though



CAPTURED ARMS ON BOARD THE *FOX*

you may see them doing it, they cannot be touched if there are none found aboard. The other day we visited Ras Lima on the Arabian side, and had a deputation of chiefs off to pay their respects. It was an ideal bay for a hiding place, being completely shut in by great rocks and barren hills. Our two attempts were unsuccessful on the Mekran Coast. We heard that the Afghan dealers had ordered all gun-running to be suspended till better times, which will mean—as soon as the *Fox* goes. After April they cannot send them up-country as there is no water for the caravans.¹ We proceeded to Jashk, marked Djask in some maps, and were ordered to Bundar Abbas at once. I don't suppose you hear much of these things at home, but the fact is, the revolutionaries have not let the grass grow under their feet and have marched into Bundar Abbas and seized the whole town without bloodshed.

The British resident has applied for protection. What will happen is hard to say. A Persian Man-o'-War—I should say *the* Persian Man-o'-War (an old B.I. armed) is due to-morrow and may want to bombard the town. Our own action depends on which side the British Govt. decides to take. Personally, I hope we won't have to bombard them as I am in sympathy with the rebels, who want a Constitution.

The Nationalist party in Persia had been granted a new Constitution by the Shah in 1907, but he had revoked it the following year, with injury added to insult: he bombarded the Parliament House. This act of violence led to the revolt of the Nationalist party under the Seyids, the religious leaders and intelligentsia. They seized Bundar Abbas early in

¹ Up till this time the dhows had taken arms across the Gulf only between the months of December and April. This period is termed the 'season.' The reason for confining themselves to these months is because travelling in Persia is only possible in the colder weather, or rainy season, as the camels get no food on the caravan routes at other times, also there is little or no water obtainable. (*H.M.S. 'Fox,'* p. 185.)

March, and on the night of the 21st when the 'Persian Navy' (consisting of one ship) appeared off the town, it was subjected to a furious fusillade from the shore. The *Fox* was lying at anchor there, and Bowers wrote :

We trained our four searchlights on the town which somewhat calmed them for a bit. However, they bust off again later and continued to blaze at each other all night. It was the first time I had ever gone to sleep in sound of men killing each other. I must say it did not keep me awake long.

On the night of April 9th the *Fox*, anchored off Reshire, was struck by a sudden gale 'of a force stronger than the oldest member of the ship's company had ever experienced' according to the author of *H.M.S. 'Fox'—East Indies* whose description of it (pp. 95-6) makes an interesting comparison with that of Bowers.

We were all up on the Quarter-deck admiring a magnificent electric storm, one of the finest I have seen. There was very little wind, practically no rain, but lightning of a most vivid character, forking everywhere. There was very little thunder too, but everything was as black as pitch except for the searchlight rays and the glaring flashes. No doubt the turbulent spirits ashore were scared. Another very curious thing was that dozens of Hawk Moths, very similar to our Pine hawks (*sphinx pinastri*) came out 6 miles, attracted by our searchlights. Several are magnificent specimens and fired me up with all my old enthusiasm. Were I ashore, in a good place for lepidoptera, I am sure it would be as of yore with me. My desire to kill them has waned however, and May will be pleased to hear that. When the ominous sounds of a 'mighty rushing wind' made themselves evident to windward, I rescued numbers of these silly blinded creatures and threw them down into the Ward-room and Captain's cabin—he doesn't know this—before the full force of the gale struck us. I had been in sail

too long not to know the meaning of things and our pet Gazelle was very worried, charging about aimlessly. When we were struck, there had been practically no preparation. For hours we struggled with awnings, etc., in a shrieking gale, with rain that positively stung with its force. Awnings were blown to ribbons, our wireless gear came crashing down, windsails went by the board, such a mess in a short time you could hardly believe. Worst of all our anchors started to drag, which was most serious as we were on a lee shore with little water. We let go another and that held till steam was raised about midnight. Then we stood out to sea, a very big sea got up in no time and gangways were out and boats unsecured. In getting in the former the seas were going right over us and everybody had to have two or more men holding on to him or some of us would certainly have been overboard. On the whole it was an unusual entertainment, reminding one of many well-remembered old times. I must say I enjoyed it from first to last.

His equanimity was much more disturbed a few days later when he was transferred with the other junior officers to the collier *Waronga*, by naval custom, for a couple of days' coaling.

It is long since I have been so dirty. The work was done expeditiously though, and any idea of there being kid-glove officers on the *Fox* was soon dispelled. That collier had some of the healthiest-looking spiders I have ever seen aboard. I was always glancing up in a furtive manner for fear of being dropped on by a hairy monster—ugh! they give me spasms as badly as ever.

His mother had evidently written him a word of caution on the subject of his ambitions, and his reply (letter dated April 14) is interesting as showing his belief that all his ways and doings were under the direction of a divine providence. It is a belief that is common to most adventurers and explorers whithersoever led.

You seem anxious about me being too ambitious. But I am no more so than I was at Sidcup College in 1894, my ideas about the worldly part of my work are the same now as then. Realizing as I do that every step I take comes from the Lord who looks after us, it is difficult to presume to stand up alone. What are 'chances' but definite opportunities? What is luck and circumstance but unseen arrangement? I have so often called upon God's help in an extremity when nothing more could be done by me, that these things can never be forgotten. . . . I know that I am often blinded to the things eternal in the rush and strenuousness of life : still, I trust that I shall never let go.

Bushire had been seized by the Nationalists towards the end of March, and in view of the turbulence caused by their occupation the Resident, Major Cox, telegraphed to Captain Hunt a request to send a landing-party of officers and blue-jackets to protect British and foreign interests there. This was hailed as an exciting relief to the monotony of hunting for apparently non-existent dhows, and the landing was effected without opposition except from a high swell on a rocky shore. Bowers was not among the officers detailed for this party, but a few days later he had as a sequel to it an adventure of his own which provided him ample compensation.

On the afternoon of April 15th a Customs launch was seen going down the coast, when news was brought that she was full of contraband and trying to slip away. A frantic signal was sent from the Customs house to the *Fox* to intercept her but without explanation for what reason ; a steam cutter was sent after her in charge of Bowers. This incident which is given a chapter to itself in *H.M.S. 'Fox'—East Indies* under title 'Steam, Cutter's Adventure,' if it added but little to the

Fox's bag, provided its biggest thrill. And it well illustrates a salient characteristic of its chief performer—when once his mind was set on a goal he would go to the limit in pursuit of it. It was just another example of that single-minded concentration on the task in hand, to the total exclusion of any other thought, that was to make him so valuable a member of Scott's Last Expedition.

His own account of the affair is worth quoting since it contains more detail.

April 18. The *Persepolis* was inshore, about 3 miles from us when I shoved off. I thought she could be caught easily so jumped into the boat with only a pistol and made off after her. My crew were entirely unarmed, two for the engines and 3 bluejackets. I headed to cut her off but soon found she was far faster than I expected, in fact she was going as fast as we were with a start of 3 good miles. We left the ship at 5 p.m. and lost sight of her at 6. The Captain getting anxious signalled off to know what number of armed men were in the boat and was very surprised to hear that only the officer in charge had a weapon. There was nothing to send after us as our speed was more than double that of any other launch. Personally I was so sure of stopping her at once, within range of the ship, that the matter of an armed guard never occurred to me till I saw the sun getting slowly nearer the horizon. Needless to say I was not going to give matters up then. We were all full of excitement as sometimes we gained and sometimes we didn't. I managed by a quiet little word or two to instil excitement into the stokers and then they gave it her. I never saw a boat whizz like our little steam cutter did then under the utmost pressure. I had oil poured everywhere constantly as I knew if we could get near enough to see them in the dark, their chance of slipping away would be small. We at last drew nearer and they—seeing they had no chance—turned towards the shore—some 7 miles off and ran her for all she was worth. This gave us a big corner to cut off and very soon I drew upon her. It

was nearly 8 p.m., 3 hours hard at about 10 knots when I headed her off. It was too dark to see much, but she was full of men and armed, as I soon saw. We were then pretty far from everywhere, 2 miles from a shore held by people of the same stamp as our friends. Waiting was no good, the stokers had pokers and fire-irons, the men fore and aft boat-hooks. I think the darkness saved us as they had no idea I had not an armed guard hiding in the boat. I kept the men down as much as possible and then, pointing my pistol at a man, who luckily was the Captain—said I would fix him off if I heard a trigger click. It was a momentary pause of doubt as we dashed alongside. The man alongside me said, 'Sir, they are all armed.' Had they had the pluck and known our few numbers, they could have fixed the lot of us. As it was, a bluejacket and myself were aboard with a flying leap and the sight of us in the dark, and my pistol, which I took good care to let the light of a skylight shine on, fixed them off. I fell them all in, and the sailor with me pointed the pistol-case at them, seeing the light did not shine on it. I took no chances then but covered them all from forward and making them come up one by one took all their arms and ammunition away and passed it into the steam cutter. I then chased the Captain, who understood English perfectly, into the cutter and another chap who seemed to be a bit of a spokesman, and stood guard over the hatches while my henchman went through the place and passed up numbers of rifles and ammunition. When I had cleared out all we could find I shoved off the steam cutter. They were simply furious when they found how they had been bluffed. I bottled all the remainder that were not actually working the ship down the fore hatch and kept my pistol cocked on them. One only was troublesome, so a judicious fist was, I thought, better than a bullet.

All was then quiet, it was a long journey back, wet and plumping into a head sea. The ship's search-lights were a goodly sight indeed, and at midnight I was close up.

The man who said 'Look out!' to me took care that when I jumped he landed on the craft simultaneously almost, though he was unarmed except for a pistol-case. My respect for the bluejacket increases with acquaint-

ance. You can go straight at a thing and have no fear but that he will do just what you do.

No doubt this sentiment was reciprocated by the men under his command. Only a few days later he had occasion to put their loyalty to another test.

The personnel of the 'Persian Navy' (S.S. *Persepolis*), whose maximum speed was only 6 knots, soon after its bombardment from Bundar Abbas, had gone over to the Nationalists, ship and all.

The Shah, whether blissfully or perversely ignorant of this interesting fact, had telegraphed to the Customs Agent at Bundar Abbas to send the ship at all costs to Basra, where some of his forces were awaiting transit to Bushire. The telegram was detected and a copy sent to the British Consul who was disposed at first to disregard it, since the Customs Agent was believed to have turned Nationalist, and the 'Navy' to be without coal. On inquiry, however, both assumptions proved to be incorrect; the Agent had relieved the Customs officer of £200 with which he had purchased ninety tons of coal, and had taken advantage of the cover provided by a fog to get it taken aboard.

The interest of Bowers' account of what followed is in his apparent dubiety as to how far bluff is compatible with truth.

I thought I was going to have another excitement the other night, but it ended mildly. The reason was that we had two very misty days. It was blowing too and quite impossible to see the shore from here. The Persian Ex-Navy was lying at the inner anchorage. We received a message to prevent her going out and to sink her if she tried it on;—the reason being that the Nationalists had already captured her and put a crowd of soldiers aboard. We made them remove these (in case they tried to bom-

bard the town) and promised to look after their capture for them. On top of this we could never let the Shah have the run of her until she is legally recaptured. As we could not pick her up with search-lights, I had to make another midnight expedition in the steam cutter to locate her and board her.

I found she had not shifted her moorings at 1 a.m. and boarded. I found myself amid a large crowd of ruffians and demanded to see the Captain.

Although we could not see her, she could see our search-lights and of course they thought they were seen from the ship. Hence their not getting under weigh. I had to tell an official untruth when I said the *Fox* had steam up and was ready to chase them if they got under weigh. I told the whole truth though when I said she would certainly be sunk if she tried to get away. This had quite a sobering effect and they all fell in and saluted on my departure.

There appears to have been indeed something of a comic-opera touch about all these proceedings. For scenario, the purple waters of the Gulf and its sunbaked shores; the squalid streets and many bazaars of Muscat, Bundar Abbas, and Bushire, alternately, for setting; solemnly vociferous in the back-ground three swarthy potentates—Amir, Shah, and Sultan; with three impassive British watchdogs to offset them in the persons of a Naval Captain, a Resident Commissioner, and a Consul; in the foreground, elusive square-sailed dhows, fussy steam launches, and a gunboat; while for chorus a turbulent rabble of brigands out for loot, and a company of light-hearted blue-jackets and marines out for fun. Of the territory for the possession of which there was such dispute Bowers wrote, 'To look at the country with its barren mountains one would hardly think it was 'worth worrying about'; and of the disputants, 'They

are not of the stuff that King Cyrus led along the bed of the river into Babylon.'

At the end of April, the Captain and all officers senior to Bowers being ashore at Bushire, he was to his great delight left in temporary command of the ship.

Strange to say, by the absurd law of precedence, I take command over an Engineer-Commander R.N., to say nothing of Staff Surgeon and Paymaster, all of whom have over 20 years of service in. If it came on to blow as it did before and I had to weigh anchor and stand out to sea, the situation would be highly amusing. . . . As there is nobody else, I have sprung into prominence in a way which has given me a permanent standing among the men. All the minor little things that never reach one as officer of the Watch come to me for arbitration, and one has often to make a decision very quickly on points which may cause trouble later. Indecision of course is fatal. The great thing is to back up the Petty Officers as far as one can in justice. They are a splendid class of men and deserve to be called the backbone of the Navy. . . . Without exaggeration I can say that as a whole I find bluejackets the finest men I have ever met. They are smart, self-reliant, and will work under the most trying circumstances in a remarkably cheerful manner. Jack of the Navy is always well thought of, and seeing things from within I think he richly deserves it. . . .

Thank you for the cuttings about the South Polar Expedition [Shackleton's]. I thought it splendid. My only regret was that I was not one of them. If only they will leave the South Pole itself alone for a bit they may give me a chance. Don't laugh !

This experience of responsibility though brief (a matter of a fortnight) was of value to him in view of later events. It was noticed that when in the Antarctic the men would most readily refer their minor grievances to him for settlement : a token of appreciation which he shared with another regular officer, Captain Oates.

He had also opportunities to improve his acquaintance with them in other ways. On May 14 he was relieved of his temporary command of the ship's party and sent to Bushire as second in command of the shore party.

May 14. The mornings are lovely, I always turn out at 5.30. a.m. and join the Residency party in a swim at 6.30. a.m. This is compulsory for the sailors. There is also an optional party at 4.30 p.m., when we muster about 30 or 40. We have an excellent cove some way out of the town, where a lovely beach gives access to an equally lovely brine—I say brine as the water is a little saltier than usual. We play water polo with a football. The game is hardly scientific, as our great object is to hit the nearest man with the ball—in the way in which he will feel it most. Then there are scrums in which about a dozen of us get mixed up like a pack of water snakes. Of course there is no respect of persons in the water and men and officers alike do their best to duck each other.

The occupation of Bushire by the small British naval contingent had been in the nature of a gesture to protect the interests of British and foreign residents during the Nationalists' rising, and to quell, if necessary, any disturbances on the part of their mercenaries, the 'tangastani.' On May 4 the Shah, acting on the advice of British and foreign Ministers, granted the Nationalists their Constitution unconditionally. This amnesty rendered the British occupation no longer necessary, and orders were received from the Foreign Office to evacuate. The evacuation was carried out very quietly on May 18 to the great and undisguised surprise of both the natives and resident foreigners. 'So certain was everybody,' wrote Bowers, 'that we had come to stay and were only to be replaced by a military occupation that no one—Persians or others

—imagined, even when our orders came, that we would really go. I was the last to leave the Customs House. The Persian officials expressed sorrow at our departure.' The sorrow would appear not to have been shared, however, by certain foreign residents to whom the popularity of the British in the town was unwelcome. But surprise was accentuated when the *Fox*, having put in to Muscat for coaling, immediately set a course for the Straits and the open sea.

CHAPTER X

Ceylon

Anuradhapura.—What wonderful men the old kings who erected the gigantic monuments of Ceylon must have been ! These buildings are not memorials to idle riches, nor the whimsical creations of an uncontrolled imagination. They exhale severe and simple greatness which, in the midst of tropical luxury, seems almost unnatural. By the side of the rocky fortress of Sigiri the castles of Europe seem like the toys of children ; the mere bath is a structure resembling one of the royal tombs of Egypt. . . . But the wonder of wonders in Ceylon is the rock of Mihintale. This retreat—a narrow terrace on the highest point of the mountain, hewn by the hand of an artist out of the rock, is overshadowed by steep cliffs which descend abruptly to the valley in front of it. Beneath, the infinite primeval forest extends, whose holy silence is only interrupted now and again by the trumpeting of elephants. . . .

The ruins of Pollonaruwa were more magnificent than any which I had seen hitherto, because the nature of Ceylon is incomparable in its creative exuberance, and has done its utmost to magnify their effect. The columns and remains of the temple, which are strewn far and wide throughout the jungle, have themselves become part of the jungle. Plants have substituted the decayed mortar, trees have completed broken cupolas. Enormous daghobas, where preserved, have become the foundation of a new nature.

KEYSERLING (*tr.* Reece).

ALTHOUGH the weather in the Gulf was warming up Bowers was sorry to leave it for two reasons : first, that service there was an economy, and (as he put it) ‘ the desire to

accumulate filthy lucre is present with me' ; and second, that (in spite of his having abjured languages) he was already 'digging in' at Persian, which he found easy on account of its resemblance to Urdu. Though examination in this subject was optional the successful candidate was entitled to a respectable gratuity, and Bowers hoped that it would further stand him in good stead in his Commander's examination, for which he was due in 1911.

After leaving the Gulf the *Fox* ran into a gale, but the weather continued so oppressive that—

It is impossible to sleep below. The Captain and all of us spread ourselves out on the quarter-deck ; and if you can imagine what it is like to sleep in a gale of wind, when it is too hot to cover oneself even with a shawl, you get some idea of things. . . . The monsoon has already burst at Ceylon, so if we do not get away from Bombay before it bursts there, we are bound to meet it sooner or later. . . . The *Fox* is a splendid sea-boat. We occasionally dip the muzzles of our 4.7 guns into an extra big wave : otherwise she is as dry as a duck.

On three previous occasions Bowers had, as he said, 'dashed in and out of Bombay from the Gulf in 48 hours.' These visits had been welcome to him as opportunity to keep his old friendships in repair. The present visit for coaling was just long enough for him to 'see all the Service crowd,' and then the *Fox* was under way again for Colombo. The monsoon broke on June 2 in the Gulf of Manaar, and Bowers—no fair-weather prophet—wrote home :

The tempest rageth overhead. In other words we are at last in the S.W. Monsoon. All down the coast an air of expectancy has prevailed and the prophets in the mess laughed and said to me 'Where is your monsoon?' I said 'wait,' and have been a bit surprised at the delay.

It has come, however, a stiff squall—followed by the full force of a gale of wind, with a huge sea and deluges of rain.

We have got it all right now and as it is abeam the motion of the *Fox* is considerable. She is such a splendid sea-boat though that I think she makes very little fuss for the sea that is running. I am writing this now, as our visit to Colombo will only be a few hours, we shall be returning however in 3 weeks or so. . . .

It was pure selfishness when I went to sea, but yet, long before, I realized in my youthful mind that there was nothing but that for me. From the time that I was first able to think for myself on general subjects, no idea of anything else had ever crossed my mind. I do not wish to defend my action, but whenever I thought of Mother I used to say to myself 'No! I can't do it.' Even after I went to the *Worcester* I used to lie awake at night and vow I would never go to sea.

One thing I have always felt grateful to Mother for is that she did not attempt to dissuade me from the last thing she wanted me to do.

Owing to certain regulations regarding quarantine, disembarkation at Colombo was not allowed, but another ship of the East Indies Squadron lay in the port, which Bowers described as 'a most unhappy ship, owing to the one man who makes or mars the happiness of all hands.' With this ship's company the *Fox* exchanged greetings before putting out again for Trincomalee, and this enabled Bowers to draw a contrast favourable to his own Commander for whom his respect had steadily increased.

. . . What a change to Captain Hunt, who without any loss of dignity or the respect of everybody under him, can yet make us all feel that he is one of us. There is never any shrieking and bellowing, panic-ing and cursing here, and yet I am sure nobody could say the *Fox* was not a splendidly disciplined ship. I have always been dead against the absurd method of doing everything to

the tune of a volley of abuse. I see now how unnecessary it is. I find that in another way I have a point of sympathy with the Captain. He has also commanded a stern wheeler up a difficult river. I was dining with him the other night—he gave me a topping dinner, he told me he had had 2 years in a stern wheel gunboat on the Zambesi; and then I told him I had also had one of the craft—the *Bhamo* was twice as big as his), so then we drifted into yarns of all sorts. From what he said I should think the Zambesi and Yangtse-kiang are very similar to the Irrawaddy. The Marine will have reason to be grateful to him if he does what he wants to do. As the *Fox* is to be engaged in suppressing the arms traffic in the Gulf again this autumn, he is going to apply for 3 extra R.I.M. officers for additional boat cruising duties. He told me that the Admiral approves. . . .

He is a born sportsman and remarkably good at everything he does—an excellent shot, and the best tennis player I have ever seen. He is a man that can't exist without company, and though most popular with all of us, he is always the Captain with a capital C. I think I have always got on best with unpopular Skippers, and yet I could not have got on better than I have in the *Fox*. Captain Hunt encourages leave for sport of any sort. I believe he sums us up far more for our sporting than for our professional capabilities. . . .

Now for Trincomalee, a spot to be dreamt about. The harbour is invisible from seaward—you head in, apparently straight for the land, at the end of a fine bay. When you get there, however, you turn round a wooded island and a big place like a lake opens up. Out of this several lochs run, most of which are absolutely hidden until their mouth is reached. There are numerous wooded islands and all the shores are wooded, terminating in beaches in places. A more ideal place for the sheltering of a large squadron and defence could hardly be found. Here is any amount of water for even Dreadnoughts, and everyone would be invisible from seaward. Everybody is on an equality in the Island. It is a good size, thickly wooded with nice paths. In fact it is an ideal place and owing to the breeze is about the coolest place in the harbour.

On receiving this description of Trincomalee from her son Mrs. Bowers replied that this was not his first visit, since she had landed there with him as a baby on the way to Calcutta.

Bowers had remained on very friendly terms with all the Commanders under whom he had served in the R.I.M., and had kept in touch with them both by letters and visits to Bombay. But before leaving Trincomalee he received a pleasant shock in the shape of a letter from one whom he thought to have long forgotten him.

Who do you think wrote me a long 'gratuitous' letter?—Capt. R. Pattman!—from Cardiff whither fortune has taken the *Loch Torridon*. He has been 90 days coming back and is full of the passage, etc.

He expects to go to Glasgow to load. In my last letter to him since I saw him, I wished him *bon voyage* and remarking on the old sore of our silent duel (silent on my part) during my last passage, I said that without going back on anything I then held to, I was willing to wash out the miserable 4 months and remember the *Loch Torridon* as she was to me before that. He has waxed quite effusive this time, says he has always been most interested in my career, wants to know all about me, adding that the smallest details are of interest, etc.

Arrived at Colombo again on June 14, officers and men proceeded by rail up to the Royal Naval Camp at Diyatawala, to complete their annual musketry course. It was Bowers' first experience of military manœuvres and these were not very much to his liking after a life at sea, but he was glad of the exercise and instruction and of the chance to improve his marksmanship with both rifle and revolver. He appreciated the beauty of his surroundings and the cool climate of a hill-station after

the aridity of Persia, and spent his hours off duty in butterfly-hunting.

I have brought my Wordsworth up here and read it a bit in my room at night, keeping one eye aloft for spiders, one of which fell on me the other night. The brutes try to spin round the lamp; fortunately we are well supplied with lizards. . . . This last week has been quieter than the first, so I have occupied my spare time going after butterflies of which there is a profusion here. I keep only perfect specimens and let the others go, and it is all round much more enjoyable to me than shooting. After all, one only eats what one shoots, but what one catches is a continual source of pleasure.

By July he could record that he had 'swelled considerably and was much the same contour as when home on leave.' About this time the junior officers were granted a fortnight's leave in rotation, and Bowers spent his characteristically determined to see and do all he could in the time. Setting forth from Colombo at 6 a.m. on the 16th on his bicycle 'well loaded up, a frame satchel amidships and an iron support aft for a meagre roll of bedding and a butterfly-net,' he rode to Chillaw, a distance of 52 miles, and spent the night in a rest-house within sound of the tremendous surf. Feeling stiff the next day, he made only 33 miles as far as to Puttalam, where he was informed that it was dangerous to go farther north unarmed on account of elephants, bears and leopards. Disregarding this well-meant advice, he started in complete darkness the next morning at 5 a.m. and by 7.30 'had reeled off two dozen miles without feeling it. I had a spell by the Kala Oya river and would have bathed but for the reminder of a motionless head drifting slowly down like a log of wood.' After

another 20 miles he stopped again at a cluster of native huts for a drink of coconut milk : 'all the village turned out to watch me drink it.' Then on again to Anuradhapura, 'where the ruined cities are,' but feeling at this moment less interested in archæology than in sustenance he continued past them for a few more miles to the rest-house at Mihintale, which he reached at 11.45, having ridden 55 miles continuously before breakfast : 'I felt I had earned that repast.'

As a test of endurance this would have been a remarkable enough feat for a man in training on a level highway in civilization, but for a man unaccustomed to it on a hilly track in a tropical wilderness it shows very unusual stamina and endurance. 'Strange to say,' is his brief comment, 'this long spell had less effect on me than the previous day's trip. So much for getting used to things. I saw nothing more ferocious than monkeys, stoats and squirrels.' Not content with these exertions, he spent the whole afternoon butterfly-hunting, and in the evening tramped off to see the old ruined temple of Mihintale.

It was a gloomy sort of spot, overhung with thick trees and weird indeed, when after about a half mile I saw a vast stone staircase ascending into equally dense forest, enhanced by the sun being low behind the trees at my back. The stone flags were all irregular, many having subsided or up-ended. It went up and up for fully 500 ft. before a sort of ledge showed some ruins and I saw daylight at the top of another flight going to the left. Up this I trudged and came on human habitations—a number of priests' huts in fact, with the ruined Dagoba or Temple on the hill above. The steps were cut in solid rock with sacred baths hewn here and there. When I reached the top (about 1,000 ft. up) the view repaid me

hands down. The breeze also met me like a wall. Although Mihintale is right in the middle of the Island, yet I could see the sea to East and West with the thickly wooded plain all round—lakes here and there, but no roads or villages through the trees. The great Dagobas at Anuradhapura above stuck up out of the green sea. It was quite a sight to remember.

Descending was not easy, as it was dark long before I reached the bottom of the colossal ladder. The stones were so irregular too. I thought as I turned towards the Rest House that I had done my whack of moving for one day. I hope I have not wearied you with all this yarn about myself. It is a mass of trivialities from beginning to end. These things seem so big and interesting while they are actually happening.

He took the succeeding days somewhat more leisurely, spending most of a day at Anuradhapura, where he was impressed with the evidence of high civilization in those buried remains of cities, and by the resemblance of the Dagobas and images of Buddha there to the Burmese; thence on to Tirappane to be enchanted by its miniature lake and flower-garden. In a dry watercourse *en route* to Sigiriya he caught four specimens of a rare 'lovely green Fritillary: it never appears but in deep half-dark glades and flies slowly, only a few inches from the ground. It was difficult work catching them, and required much motionless waiting.' He reached Sigiriya 'with the last of the daylight,' and was up at 5.30 next morning to inspect the Rock.

It is a wonderful place, simply precipitous all round and overhanging mostly—just like a boulder resting on a plain. It was an ancient fortress and religious centre and certainly deserved the former designation, as a more impossible place to scale one could hardly imagine. Without artificial aid nothing without wings could hope

to tackle it—barring perhaps lizards. I thought I was going to have a struggle to climb it, but was disappointed as all the ticklish spots were girt with iron stanchions. In some places you needed them too. The top was quite an education in itself as to the energy of the people who built on top of such a place. What I like about them was, they never forgot to hew baths in the solid rock. On the top of the rock alone, there were about 6 baths of considerable size. The walls and remains of the Citadel and temples are overgrown ruins and all that remains of this monument to early Buddhist energy is a mound surmounted by a pole. The whole is 500 ft. high and seems higher viewed from the platform of the plains. The high land to the southward looks very near and almost would make a cyclist's heart fail him to contemplate the ascents necessary. I have set myself to do it though and I would not belong to the family of Bowers if I did not attempt the apparently impossible. I could hardly be in better all-round condition for something strenuous, than I am at present anyhow. The shadow of the Sigiriya Rock thrown on to the plain reminded me of 'The shadow of a great Rock in a weary land.' And though Ceylon is hardly a weary land, according to accepted tradition it is like all tropical lowlands, no place to travel in during the heat of the day.

After a field-day with his net in the jungle near Nalande on the way to Kandy :

I shall long remember the excellent sport of that day and nothing was caught without a lot of trouble, which after all is true sport. Unlike shooting, a butterfly has far more chances than a bird, seeing that you have to get so close to him. So far, too, I find that though numerous tropical butterflies are very lively and pretty wily too. I saw an immense spider. He had spun a web of at least 12 sq. ft. right across a glade. I had to break it down to get past, though it gave me the spasms to go near it. The web was more like elastic than anything and strong enough to hold a pigeon I should think. I had to throw 3 heavy boughs at it before it was demolished and I did *not* kill the centrepiece.

The prospect of getting his home-mail at Kandy lent such speed to his wheels, though uphill all the way, that at one stage 'almost inside out for want of breath' he stopped for an impromptu shower-bath under a waterfall ; and arrived at the hotel in time to get his letters and a parcel of clothes and dress for dinner—

when who should appear on the scene but the Captain and Paymaster. They had just arrived by train. They both jumped up and changed to my table and if they were not glad to see me they acted so well that I am content to suppose they were. We all spun yarns and the Captain (with his usual tact I suppose) was full of butterfly lore. He said he had done a lot of it in Japan—assisting a brother officer, who being 19 stone was hardly active enough to nab the insects. We are to be in Colombo for 'the August war,' a great function here. . . .

All news was news to me when I arrived, as I had seen no paper since 16th. The Shah had been kicked out—Good luck to the Nationalists (and my travelling companion of the Dw'arka' is Regent after all). The *Sphinx*, *Lapwing*, *Redbreast* and *Lawrence* are all hanging round Bushire and the *Fox* is under notice as before. . . .

After breakfast I decided to walk round the Lake up to Wall park and round via the old Palace and Temple of the Tooth. The Temple was most interesting—the tooth by the way was Buddha's. You do not see this interesting molar as it is enclosed in a magnificent gold casket—far more interesting to my mind. I forget its actual weight and measurements and would not bore you with them even if I could remember. The pictures of the Buddhist Hell were most appalling. Each sin had its particular torture. Most of them beyond description for fiendish ingenuity. You can only thank God that they are fanciful. The greatest wonder is that human beings can conjure up ideas beside which Dante's *Inferno* is a pleasure garden ! No sin, however awful, could earn the least of such tortures. A terrible fate is allotted to killers of animals—you might sympathize with that.

About half an hour after that I saw a wretched cow—a bag of bones with sores and disease, yet because its owner was a follower of this creed he would not kill it. The unfortunate animal made me long for a means of killing it without pain—such a long-drawn-out death. After lunch we all had another yarn, then I bid adieu to pack. . . .

I have not been able to tell half of what I have seen around Kandy. You would perhaps be bored. Needless to say it is wonderful in its beauty of both natural and artificial work. The lakes, hills, buildings and flora altogether are quite indescribable by Yours truly.

He left Kandy for Perydinoya and identified his butterfly specimens at the museum there. On the 26th he reached Nawara Eliya, the highest hill-station in Ceylon, which is situated in the mountains he had viewed from the Sigiriya Rock.

I cannot describe my feelings yesterday as the agony of superhuman exertion always passes when over. However, I may say that it is practically a record. Nobody has—to the knowledge of the Secretary here—ever taken a bike up the Rambodda Pass, though many have risked their necks by going down it. The best way to go downhill is to make fast a heavy log astern. This acts as a continual brake and your brakes only come in for emergency. Even a small pass here will wear out any brake if kept on continuously. The Captain insisted that I should put up at the Hill Club as we are hon. members and it is therefore cheaper—and much better than an hotel. He also wanted me to give some messages to the Secretary. This place is not unlike Maymyo. It is quite cold, a fire in the reading room is not out of place and your cold tub makes you jump.

I must now knock off, as I want to climb Mt. Peduralagota (usually called Mt. Pedro). It is 8,295 ft. and the highest peak in Ceylon. As I am over 6,000 ft. up here, the remaining 2,000 should not be arduous and I shall not have a heavily laden bike with me this time.

Details are lacking of his ascent of this mountain

and of any subsequent adventures on his trip, for his next letter is dated August 8 from the *Fox* at Colombo ; but enough has been told to indicate the stuff of which he was made.

This letter has an amusing description of an inspection of the ship and 'collision and fire stations' carried out under the eye of the Admiral.

The inspection was rather a mouthful to spring on us just after the return from camp at Diyatalawa. Anyhow we all dug out like fury and had the ship looking all right. Friday was the inquisition day when officers are asked searching questions and have to drill portions of men before the Admiral and Staff. I learnt a horrible lot beforehand, dug out for hours and felt like a balloon, blown out with information. Fortunately I was soon able to let some of it out. Everything went pretty well, there were a few mistakes, as we had been separated for so long. However, the inquisitor expressed himself as very well satisfied with everything when we finally made foot in the harbour. . . .

The Admiral ordered us to engage an imaginary torpedo destroyer and then we had a collision and 2 shot holes between wind and water. While we were getting out the collision mat and closing water-tight compartments, he put our steering gear out of action—necessitating steering from below. All this time we were blazing away at the target and had hardly fixed up the imaginary holes when he said 'You are on fire forward.' Unfortunately the order was mistaken for under the fo'c's'le, instead of above, and no measures to combat the fire appeared—all the preparations were going on below. My party was at the collision mat and when I saw nobody at the fire, I began to wonder if it were my job. Finally I rushed my party forward, and by the time the Admiral descended from the upper bridge, had connected up hoses and was squirting much water all over the place. The Captain looked rather askance at me and then the Fire Brigade appeared and took over.

I retired rapidly to the scene of the collision and dodging the Admiral managed the show with great éclat. Of

course I had made a mistake, but the Admiral did not know one party from the other and it was fortunate that I was there, otherwise there would have been nobody. Then he put our forward magazine out of action and did many other things, altogether we were jolly glad to see the last of him. As he expressed himself as 'quite satisfied' we all felt rather bucked.

Knowing the inner workings myself, I was surprised that we did not get a wiggling all round.

The Admiral's inspection was followed by the great annual Colombo 'week'—races, games and tournaments, dances, dinners and at-homes. In the social side of these festivities Bowers was not so much interested; the Admiral's visit to the ship concerned him for professional reasons, however. The period of his temporary attachment to the *Fox* was due to expire in September, but Captain Hunt requested the Admiral for a six-months' extension on Bowers' behalf. The Admiral signified his own approval of this application and forwarded it for consideration to the Director, R.I.M., at Bombay.

Bowers classified his butterflies—a very representative Ceylon collection—at the Colombo Museum: 'at least two species are rare, in fact one is very much so and a perfect specimen' (these species are unfortunately not named). He notes that the damp air of Colombo made it impossible to set the wings: and kept them relaxed till arrival at Trincomalee on the 15th. Here too he came upon a newspaper article in praise of spiders, which roused him to opposition.

The author eulogizes the scrawly horror and introduces a strange theory (his subject was the common house spider). He said that they were probably unable to see more than an inch or so and were guided to victims entirely by web vibrations—away from the web, they

will not touch an insect—even one-sixteenth of an inch away, provided the insect remains motionless. He also says a lot more in favour of these brutes. The eyesight test, however, fails with outdoor spiders. Here one saw me 2 yards away yesterday and I tested the sight of others—at a safe distance.

Being allowed an extra 'short leave' of 48 hours (granted at the Captain's discretion), he spent it in another solitary excursion afield on August 21 : 38 miles uphill to Alutoya before breakfast, and 16 miles to Habarane, where he spent the night.

I dined early and slept soundly till 5.30 a.m. when I partook of tea, and leaving my little baggage at the rest-house started for Polonaruwa. The butler was gaping with surprise but said nothing. I headed the bike on to the right road and started in inky blackness, accentuated by the dense jungle on either side. Before long I regretted not having a lamp as there was no moon and where the trees overhung the darkness was pitchy. No road could I see, but the slit of stars above kept me along in spite of turns and twists at a good stiff pace. By the time I could read a milestone, I had done 12 good miles—a pleasant surprise. At 7 a.m. my destination Polonaruwa reached (27 miles from Habarane) I called on Mr. Bell the Archæological Commissioner. He was still in pyjamas but was most kind and got me a guide for the ruins, asking me to breakfast too. The latter I had to decline for want of time, I spent over 2 hours before I had done the round.

The marvellous energy of these early people is wonderful to contemplate. Mr. Bell has dug out all the ancient places I have gone to. He has years of restoration and jungle clearing before him at this out-of-the-way place. Buried in the densest jungle are the ruins of a great city and the Capital of some ancient and powerful dynasty. All these vast tanks, some with an area of 50 square miles, were built artificially by these people. In fact Mr. Bell says there is not a natural lake in Ceylon. Vast images of Buddha in all attitudes are there, hewn in solid rock, besides temples of remarkable design and structure. I

did the lot and returned, rather tired to start with, to Habarane by noon. The journey was very hot, a hot wind against me and to my distorted imagination, hills were magnified greatly. The milestones were mill-stones almost. I found, however, that by not looking at them time passes more quickly. The worst of it was that I could not help counting them when I did not look for the number and so failed to deceive myself!

At last I had to drink or I would never have struggled out the last 10 miles. A very nice old native woman in a wayside hut gave me some milky coloured water and refused all offers of recompense. It seemed very nice and I could easily persuade myself that the colour was not what it was—namely earth-earthy. Your little cup was very useful and the great admiration of the old lady. She must have wondered at the re-filling process! At Habarane I fed and after a spell went junglewards after a rare fritillary I had obtained there before. I had no luck and netted nothing. This morning I left at 5.30 a.m. (just light) and did 30 miles in 3 hours without stopping an instant. It is splendid travelling on these good roads with the orb of day *not* overhead. At Kautolai once again I spent 2 very comfortable hours (tub and breakfast) and at 10.30 started for Tamblegan. I caught butterflies on the way and took my time ($4\frac{1}{2}$ hours to do 12 miles). I don't think one could have had better sport. I went at it in spite of streams of perspiration.

He confessed later that that fortnight's cycling in Ceylon was the most strenuous exercise he had ever set himself to, and that it had reduced his weight from 12 stones to 10 stones 2 lbs: 'as long as I am not below 10 stones you can be sure of my being fairly plump, and my usual healthy appetite continues unimpaired.' But seven weeks later he could report that he had put on 17 lbs.; and 'the funny part is that I am very little bigger in actual size. The staff surgeon's opinion is that I have generated a lot of muscle out of what may have been partly fat before, and hence the increase.'

CHAPTER XI

The Persian Gulf (continued)

To my mind the best of life is—something definite to accomplish, a certain course to run, plenty of difficulties and perhaps a spice of danger in the way, and the certainty that there can be no stopping or relaxing till the end is accomplished.

H. R. B. (*from a letter from the Gulf*).

BOWERS' next letter is dated August 27 'from Trincomalee to Colombo, and after that goodness knows where,' and in it he says that he had been oyster-chipping with Lieut. Hunt (the Captain's nephew) in Dutch Bay and had returned to the ship for dinner when 'a bomb-shell fell—a telegram in cypher to proceed to Colombo with all dispatch for coaling,' and before midnight the *Fox* was under way for an unknown destination.

Everybody in the mess has a different theory : trouble in the Aden hinterlands—another Somali show—Bushire again—arms traffic at Muscat—trouble in India, etc. I had a long yarn with the Captain who is like a boy in his keenness, I have never seen him so excited. He is hoping for Somaliland, and I cannot help feeling that the Gulf will be a little 'just so' at present. I had begun to get quite fond of Trincomalee : it is all country and the seabeach and coast are alike fascinating. I cannot find words to describe the harbour. It is all land-locked, and deep blue and green water, as clear as tropical sea-

water can be. Now we are pitching and driving into our old pal the monsoon again.

Two days later from Colombo—

All over—our hopes and fears and speculations. The trouble was at Hadieda, in the Yemen province of Arabia 100 miles north of Persia on the eastern side of the Red (hot) Sea. The Arabs are always there on the war-path, but this time the whole place and the head of his Britannic Majesty's Consul is in imminent danger. The Admiral has wired to know if the *Philomel*, now at Malta, can be sent instead as she can get there as fast as we.

The Admiral's telegram had the desired effect, and the *Philomel* was sent to deal with the situation in Arabia. The following day all hands of the *Fox* fell in on the quarter-deck to hear the report of the Admiral's inspection. It was satisfactory beyond expectation—'the crew of the *Fox* is too good for the ship and deserves a more modern cruiser.' Captain Hunt also received a letter from the Admiralty conveying the thanks of the Government to the officers and men of his ship 'for their conduct at Bushire, where they had proved the means of averting what would have been, in all probability, a massacre of European residents.'

There were seven battle-cruisers beside the *Fox* lying in the harbour at this time, and on September 18, the annual Regatta was held. Of the seventeen events the *Fox* won thirteen, with three seconds, and one third.

This was followed by a 'fleet cruise' to the Laccadive Islands, and then the *Fox* sailed to Bombay to be dry-docked for a fortnight. She left Bombay on October 15 and four days later arrived at Jaskh in the Persian Gulf. It was now the 'season' for gun-running, and hopes ran high for

good sport in chasing dhows. Two lieutenants R.N., Scrivener and Hunt, and Bowers of the R.I.M., were selected for this adventure.

Each of these officers [we are told] had been studying the subject of 'dhow-chasing,' and was an expert at it by this time. It is an extremely difficult and dangerous task to board a dhow at night. The usual procedure is to run alongside 'bows on' and then, when the men in the bows have got the gun-runners covered with rifles or pistols, to board the dhow. . . . The chief thing to remember is to keep to windward of the dhow, as the wideawake individuals who man these craft have a playful habit, if a cutter goes alongside to leeward, of dropping their huge sail down on top of the cutter. If they succeed in doing this it is a simple matter to shoot the bluejackets down while they are struggling in the folds of the sailcloth.¹

Each of the three officers was given a cutter and a strip of the Mekran coast to patrol and it proved a business more fraught with toil than with excitement. Bowers' appreciation of this type of craft is thus expressed in a letter to his friend James Paul :

A service cutter is a wonderful boat in good hands and a very rotten one in bad ones. Sailing a pinnace or launch is child's play compared with the dipping lug, and yet the cutter's rig—for the size—is the best all round for every style of wind and weather. In sailing, the trim of the boat is of tremendous importance—shifting the crew fore and aft according to the tack and requirements and the amount of sea running.

He wrote home as follows :

Our mode of operations is to anchor close inshore at night and keep out of gunshot by day. These can be modified to our fancy of course. There are also absurd precautions for getting alongside dhows, which you can regard or not. In any case the regulations are so worded

¹ *H.M.S. 'Fox,'* pp. 179, 180.

that you are responsible if anything amiss happens and so it is no use bothering. '*Risk nothing, do nothing*' is a motto of my own, though no doubt somebody has said the same before. The ship appeared like a spectre, every morning the light finding out her white sides very quickly. During the day I cruised off shore and thoroughly examined my beat, made sketches, took bearings, etc. After 4 days I had things at my finger-tips all along. The afternoon heat was most trying though. I very foolishly left my bare feet exposed and have only just been able to wear shoes since. I find the intense heat is the only objection to what would otherwise be nothing but a delightful picnic. When sailing, of course, an awning is impossible and in an open boat there is no shelter, she being full up below the thwarts with provisions and water, a maxim gun forward, a stove aft and 14 hefty men. I sleep athwartships right aft. In the stern sheets also 'Jim Crow' the Interpreter and the Coxswain sleep. All hands spread the sails over the oars amidships and sleep like sardines, head and feet alternating.

Our food is the old hard biscuit, tinned meat, and naval cocoa. There is no silver spoon for officers on these occasions and privacy is out of the question.

During my first 4 days I chased and examined a few dhows but had no luck, neither did anybody else. The next day I decided to walk along the creek from end to end and took 'Jim Crow' and one hand. My feet were too bad for boots so I walked with them bare. I shall long remember that walk, first one mile through water, then another through mud, in which you sank a foot at every step. The mud had a smattering of tiny shells which cleaned my already burnt skin off nicely. I was glad to get on to the hard sand again. I then trudged the country to the base of a high ridge 6 miles off.

Jim carried my sextant and the bluejacket a pistol, I carried myself which I found enough. I found a large dry estuary and fixed its position, this being the only semblance of a creek there. Not being satisfied with that we went on and on towards some date palms in the distance, the sun getting hotter and hotter and the ground likewise and the exposed uppers of my feet too. After 5 miles of this we reached the palms, which were scattered

and little shelter—no creek as I had expected. Fortunately we found a village 2 miles on, out of the glaring open sand plain. It was agony getting there, but the shade of a hut was a vast relief. There were no Afghans, but the headman gave me a mat and water, putting down a plate of dates and later on fresh greasy chapatties. The dates were too mucked up for me and the latter impossible. The water however was cool and excellent. The bluejacket wired into the dates and Jim Crow lapped up the greasy slabs with the greatest gusto—the ghi squelching out of them—ugh ! From this friendly man I hired 3 donkeys to complete our trip on, it was then out of the question to go on on foot for me at any rate. On the mokes we made fine progress towards the sea, the village being over 2 miles inland. I then followed the coast far enough to assure myself of no other creek and returned.

The boat took some finding as she was miles off and we had to wade again through the mud. This part was less trying than before.

I took numerous soundings and made a rough chart, and on return to the ship made a good one. The Captain was very pleased with it, so my return was auspicious.

On November 6 he wrote again :

Some of these dhows are simply immense, many being 200 to 300 tons with one enormous sail, greater in area even than our huge courses on the *Loch Torridon*. They remind one greatly of the ships of Galleon days, their sterns being almost identical with the old craft of Drake's day. Some, too, have a crew of about 50 and have compasses, chronometer and sextant. I was amused to find a Brown's Nautical Almanack on one, whose skipper was a charming old Arab, who spoke Hindustani perfectly. I have been deprived of my interpreter 'Jim Crow,' as I am supposed to fend for myself. My Arabic is nil and Persian limited to the necessities of life, but fortunately most dhows have somebody aboard who speaks the language of Urdu.

I had a long chase after a dhow the other day, which was so tardy about heaving to that my maxim was requisitioned pretty frequently. This was heard from all the boats and I have now got the reputation of being a

relentless persecutor. Every dhow Scrivener has boarded, which I have done before him, has, according to him, borne traces of much battle. In fact he says that when they see a dhow, with unusually tattered sails, they at once conclude she has crossed my path. I personally find, however, that the ensign, waved from forward where they can see it, and a single rifle shot, will bring any of them to.

Needless to say I have hoped and longed to catch a dhow before I go, but have only to-night left in which to do it. . . .

I have got an entirely new crew this time. Cooped up in a boat, with 13 or 14 men one gets to know them all as thoroughly as they know you. I think it is most excellent training for an officer to be brought in such close contact with the Lower Deck. Not so much to a 'scion' of the Mercantile Marine like myself, as to a Naval Officer who has never quite rubbed shoulders so closely. The officer in a boat like this is never unwatched, even at night. The look-outs keep the corners of their eyes on him, but still withal there is a feeling of being figuratively 'in the same boat' and never have I seen the gulf between the Quarterdeck and the Lower Deck so narrow, and yet so impassable as it is in the R.N.

If I had a good opinion of Jack before, it is better now. The only thing they don't like about me is the fact that I won't allow an awning to be spread at night. Strange to say Jack is an awful 'fug' and the idea of being 'wet with the dew of heaven' is intensely abhorrent to him. Broad hints have been dropped in surprisingly ingenious ways, but I prefer to be dense.

All this while he had been expecting daily to be recalled to Bombay since his 'extension' appeared to be running on indefinitely. The day after his last letter he received orders to rejoin the ship. He was to be relieved by another officer of the R.I.M. ; and was in the act of boarding the ship from his cutter together with his kit, preparatory to immediate departure, when a voice from the deck

sang out cheerily, 'It's all right—you can leave it in the boat.' He was told that his 'relief' had been posted elsewhere on special service at the last minute, and his own extension was prolonged 'for a bit.' He wrote from the *Fox* in jubilant spirits on Nov. 10th—

I am still here after all, a reprieve of a temporary nature having come my way in a most unexpected fashion. It is really wonderful how fortunate I am, knowing the number of deserving chaps who never strike the luck I do, somehow. Perhaps I am more appreciative of my surroundings wherever I happen to be. Anyhow my good fortune since joining the Service has been marvellous really. . . . In any case I think I am a fixture for the rest of the year anyway. Captain Hunt is a brick and is doing all he can to keep me from returning.

And then comes the remark, apropos of a reminiscence of cool weather in southern latitudes on the *Loch Torridon*—

Talking of 'Down South' I would enjoy a niche in the forthcoming Expedition under Captain Scott. However, I am afraid chances are not in my favour this time. If I were on leave I would worry them all right.

That he was contented, and more than contented, with his present lot, however, the following extracts from his letters show.

I had a very stiff breeze yesterday and the biggest sea of my experience here, 20 miles out from the land, I overhauled and examined a dhow loaded with coal. The Arab skipper was most affable, shook hands most heartily and pressed some dates upon the boats' crew for which he refused payment from me. He said there was far too much wind and sea for my boat, at which I laughed heartily.

One thing is certain and that is that Captain Hunt wants to keep me on. He is awfully decent always and said he would 'see' when I suggested my being away

in a boat would cause me to miss the fortnightly mail down. I am the only officer that has not been changed so far. The others all look upon boat life as a hardship, to be avoided as much as possible. I can't understand it myself as the life is to me ideal. The Captain and No. 1 always greet me with 'Not tired of it yet? Still keen on going away?' They always get the same answer and always will. The reliefs are worked fortnightly for the crews and the officers have the option of changing them too. To me the life is one of constant pleasure. You are in command to start with, the command is essentially a sailing ship and requires handling, you are always in the open air and live the simple life in the true sense of the word.

Nov. 23. Captain Wilson-Barker sent me an account of Prize Day. We are getting a very large percentage of old Worcesters in the R.I.M. now. I sometimes smile at myself being in the R.I.M. when it was so far from my intention at the outset of my career. As a matter of fact I decided nothing beforehand except that I knew I had to go to sea. That was impossible to combat. I had a definite intention of getting all my certificates as soon as possible—doing my year in the Navy and getting my promotion to Lieutenant at 25 (the minimum age for R.N.R. officers). Beyond that I had no plans and no 'line' in view. In fact I never inclined towards a big 'line,' and would probably have stuck to tramps.

Now that the depression in shipping and trade generally and the details of small pay and no standing are apparent, I think it is providential that I have struck such a good job as the R.I.M. Still my first love—the sailing ship—has stuck fast by me, and if I were to be chucked out of the Service, through any misfortune, I should probably hark back to them. At present my little sailing ship which I command is a highly desirable post and a life which in every detail suits my approval. A good boat, and a good strong willing crew of blue-jackets, armed well enough to fight anything in reason and strong enough to resist the worst weather. Good plain food and an open-air life, with plenty of swimming and plenty of work and a dash of excitement (or at least anticipation occasionally) and no luxuries—what more

can one want? It is essentially a man's life and one that I hope for me will be prolonged. It is strange that my little cutter should have, for a crew, exactly half the complement that was assigned for a monster like the *Loch Torridon*. . . .

I remember that the best way to learn to command is to learn how to obey: it is a lesson that can be learned in twelve years, and it is that since I went to the *Worcester*. Also that my forebears were in command of their own ships as youngsters. For this reason I am certain I shall make a better commander than lieutenant. It is my vocation. . . .

I have found out much that is of interest as well as of use and have made a very careful survey of this little known portion of the coast. It is so difficult to do one's 'fair copy' in the boat though, that neatness is not all it should be. Still I hope to hand in a very respectable chart to Captain Hunt on my return to the ship next time. It represents weeks of work—that little piece of paper, so I hope it will be appreciated.

It was only on his intermittent returns to the ship from the cutter that he found time to shave, and as these returns to civilization were of minutes only he 'decided against shaving. When I saw myself in a glass a week later it was a shock—a mop of matted hair, and a crude bristly beard of a lighter though more intense hue. Skin the colour of mulligatawny soup—still, I wasn't dirty.' His light complexion was the greatest trial to him, and his skin suffered from constant peeling, so much so that in his opinion he never had the same face from week to week. But in December he wrote: 'I really believe that old Sol is getting tired of his eternal blistering of me—my skin retains a dried half-scab and much-wrinkled surface now.'

In the light of after events his letter of December 5, bringing his mother his best wishes for the New

Year with its expression of his simple conviction in a divine overruling, has a pathetic significance. In retrospect he had every reason to feel thankful, for he had nothing but happiness to look back upon ; and if the past may be taken to foreshadow the future, in prospect he had every reason for good hope.

Dec. 5, '09. I hope the happiness for the New Year will extend throughout the whole and trust God's blessing will be upon you from first to last—His counsel on every occasion of perplexity and His strength in any case of anxiety or trouble, if either of them must needs be ; also whatever He has in store for us as a family ; we can only accept and trust in His great and wonderful goodness, which we have indeed experienced and *know*. I underline the word 'know' as I mean it in the most emphatic sense. That knowledge of certainty beyond doubt or conjecture. Looking back, this past year has held much for me personally, which has been more than pleasant. Of course the pleasure of '08 when I was home could hardly be exceeded, but life cannot be always a holiday. In fact just the opposite would be my personal choice and I am glad to look back on a year full of new and unique experience, from which I shall hope to emerge a more useful man—secularly at any rate—in things which I feel sure will have a bearing on the future too. In spite of all the work and other minor things supposed to be hardships by some, I am looking back on a year of real pleasure, a year in a ship where discipline and order have reigned without unpleasantness, suspicion or petty jealousies, which are so evident in most ships. Yes ! I can say that this year has been a good one and I have been blessed without deserts.

We were hoisted and the ship steamed North to give us a new station each. I am glad of the change, we are now up North by many miles, in fact nearer Bundar Abbas than Jashk or on the Persian shore eastward of the Gulf proper and north of the Straits of Ormuz. The territory of Minab to the north is friendly, my beat is off Ligarat the border-town, Hunt being about 10 miles

South at Gurw. I have a free hand to the north and south of Gurw, I wonder why I have always been given the northern beat—certainly I prefer it. The natives here are much more sociable and less suspicious, the country too is less barren.

On the same date he wrote to his sister who was in Switzerland—

Are you being broiled, baked, frizzled or glared upon from sunrise to sunset like a certain relative of yours? Or do you ever see that most delightful of all scenes—a driving Scotch mist obscuring everything? Personally I can see much attraction in slopping across a heather-covered moor, with low-scudding mists and driving rain all round. That is what nature intended I should live in and enjoy living in, though a certain amount of sunshine is necessary too. The mixture would be beautiful and you would understand it better, were you exposed all day to a sun that never winks; never hides a glaring ball of fire till the old Earth, as if with a sigh of relief, rolls over and covers his face by her kindly horizon. I would be the last to belittle the sun, but here's to the rain and the wind and the snow—the driving scud; grey seas and cloud-covered hills of a land that is better than this oven. . . .

Yesterday we were all hoisted and thus ends my first lap of seven weeks' boat cruising. We were glad to see the ship as we had run out of everything except rice. Boiled rice for breakfast, dinner and supper for 2 whole days, can be better imagined than described—especially unstrained as we had no implements for doing so. Fortunately a flavouring of salt made it eatable. I did not take my allowance of sugar, as there was hardly enough for the hands. It was beastly and yet there was the greatest cheerfulness throughout.

His next letter is dated December 15, H.M.S. *Philomel*, Muscat—

The end of my time on the *Fox* came with the usual thunder-clap that these things do, though it was no more than I could expect, even if I had dared to hope. . . .

Among other poisonous telegrams on our arrival at Muscat was one from the Director R.I.M.—‘If Lieut. Bowers has not already left he is to proceed at once to Karachi and report himself to the M.T.O. there.’ Captain Hunt screwed up his face, ‘There you are, I am afraid I can do no more.’ (He had already dodged one mail on my account!) However, he would not put me ashore at once, and the next day said he had thought out a job for me which might delay matters a day or two and incidentally save him the loss of an officer. In the last dhow captured there were 6 Afghans—this raised the total to 23. The Govt. of India had requested their all being sent to India for trial, under a naval lieutenant and a guard of marines. Thus it was that I was transferred to the *Philomel*. . . .

At the last everybody was poking round and helping to pack my household goods, and Hunt junior preparing what he called the ‘Stirrup Cup.’ When I arrived in the Wardroom a formidable array of champagne bottles denoted the quality of it. Certainly had I been disposed I could have arrived on the *Philomel* in a hilarious condition. . . . The remains of my sunburn had formed scabs on my knuckles, which gave way after the first few handshakes and left me rather messy. . . . When the Captain said, among other nice things, that he was very sorry to lose me, I said he could not be more sorry than I was to leave: certainly I never spoke more truly. I felt indeed that I had never been in a happier ship, nor have I ever before been made to feel quite so much that my little niche will not soon be filled. These things however are hard for one to express on paper, and then only to mothers. . . .

The Commander of the *Philomel* (which is a 3rd Class cruiser) is under Captain Hunt’s orders. He wanted to get rid of his bevy of Afghans yesterday, so signalled by wireless, ‘Permission requested to get rid of prisoners as they are very dirty in ship.’ He received from Captain Hunt the terse reply, ‘Scrub them!’

Although Bowers appears to have been unlucky in capturing arms on the several dhows he boarded, he came in for a goodly share of the spoils—five

good rifles of .303 and .450 bore, of English and German make. But his great contribution to the record of the *Fox* in the Gulf was his charts, which were acknowledged to be models of neatness and accuracy.

I have been very busy over this side opposite the Mekran coast—not only boarding dhows, but surveying the coast, which is practically uncharted, except from information obtained from an Indian Navy Survey in 1822.

It has always been considered unsafe to do any surveying and especially to go ashore. In our armed boats the former is as safe as being in Church, and the latter has a spice of its own, which I can't explain. I could investigate with an armed escort, but find it is a much safer and surer plan to go alone. As often as not I swim ashore in a bathing costume and dodge off among the sandhills, where it would take a lynx to see me. You can always keep off the skyline and using the coarse grass can play the 'boy scout' to advantage. As a rule you can see for miles across the level country between the coast and the hills.

I have made several interesting discoveries, not by any means useless. Having discovered several masked redoubts and 2 minor creeks, the climax was reached yesterday when I strolled behind a coastal ridge of low, sharp, bare rock about 100 ft. high. I was in Nature's rig, but nevertheless found a most important creek, hitherto undreamed of, which ran behind the ridge, hiding anything so completely as to make it an impossibility to see or follow. . . .

The Chart I completed the other day has met with the Captain's approval—so much so that copies are to be sent to the other ships and my fixings of one or two cardinal points to the Hydrographic Office, London. Not that a survey could not have been done by any officer of a certain amount of experience, just as well. Few, however, have the interest to take up a job that means lots of pottering work and no thanks. I did it because I liked the job, it appealed to me and I did my very best,

though all the plotting and finish had to be done on a plank, resting on my knees, with a roll of the boat to disarrange my attempts at neat writing. In the main it is reliable, considering the crude instruments and conditions. Nothing short of a proper survey will reveal its discrepancies.

These scouting expeditions, on which he volunteered for the fascination of carrying out a piece of independent and original work, were far more gruelling than his letters suggest. The demands which it made upon his resource and endurance lent it an added attraction to him, however. There is no doubt that he undertook it deliberately as discipline to put him to the test, preliminary to greater tests to come. And yet, after the Winter Journey in the Antarctic, he confessed that although for several days he walked about 'like a cat on hot bricks' while the circulation slowly returned to his frost-numbed feet, this was nothing to the pain he suffered when he 'led the simple life' barefoot on the sun-scorched sand of the Gulf.

Recalling his services in the Gulf twenty-eight years later, Admiral Sir Allan Thomas Hunt writes :

Bowers served with me in the *Fox* for more than a year and I have never been served by a more loyal or indefatigable officer ; he was quite unique in one way, as when we were very shorthanded and he had a mere 12 hours' watch to keep besides his other watch he wasted away, but when he had to work 20 hours out of the 24 he then began to enjoy life and put on flesh almost visibly. He was a fine seaman and was away in a boat for months and never seemed to sleep. There is no doubt that Scott chose the right man to take with him to the Pole.

A brother-officer who knew him well from the time of his appointment to the R.I.M. to his

departure for the Antarctic—Lieut.-Commander Geoffrey Rawson—has written :

Bowers was a remarkable man with unusual qualities. His physical endurance was extraordinary ; he was very clear-headed, and had a bright and cheerful nature, a great sense of humour, and great powers of mental concentration. He could work in adverse circumstances very quickly and accurately, and he had a neat and orderly mind. His navigation and journals were models of their kind. He was a very efficient officer, a sound seaman and a splendid fellow in a tight corner. All these qualities I observed in him when serving with him as a ship-mate in various ships before his Antarctic odyssey. He had a very fine character. He was as straight as a die, and one sensed deeply religious instincts below the surface. He was one of those rare spirits who exercised boundless if unknown influence for good wherever he was.

I well remember the day he received a telegram telling him of his appointment to the *Terra Nova*. His delight was boundless—it was the realization of his dreams. I called him at 4.30 on the morning he was to sail for England in the P. & O., and my last memory of him is sitting on the gunwale of the launch as he waved good-bye.¹

On returning to Rangoon, Bowers was transferred to R.I.M.S. *Northbrook*, in which he served till early in March 1910, and then for brief periods in the *Tamil* and the *Panther*, plying between Calcutta, Madras, Colombo, and Bombay. These months would seem to have been monotonously free from alarms or excursions of any kind, human or elemental, till his last letter from Indian waters records an exciting encounter at close quarters with his pet abomination in its most terrifying guise.

¹ Quoted in Hayes' *The Conquest of the South Pole*, p. 105.

. . . Oh, last night—*last night*—the horror of horrors came. I woke at 1 a.m. and opened my eyes wide—you can guess what it was, but you can't guess what I felt like. Not 3 inches from my nose and making straight for my cheek was the incarnation of my conception of the blackest and most horrible fiend the powers of darkness can produce. I did not utter a sound, but if ever a man got out of a bunk with alacrity I was out of mine. Fast as the huge tarantula was he had only covered about 6 inches before we faced each other for a war to the death. But it was not so. I grabbed a shoe, but I hadn't the pluck to dab him with that, as he was half behind your collar-bag at the moment. I wasn't going to risk a miss though, and running out got hold of a hard broom. When I came back he was *gone*. I have searched in vain, but there are so many cracks and crannies especially under the washstand where one could never probe without shifting the lot, but *that* bunk—or any other in that cabin—will never see my sleeping form again. It seems a long yarn about nothing, but I would rather dive on to the back of a 16-ft. shark than face that awful thing. I could see its hairs in the dark.

It proved to be his last encounter with 'the scrawly horror,' for destiny was at hand to transfer him at one bound from the torrid to the frigid zone.

He had kept his secret well. It was the one and only secret that he had ever kept from his mother, knowing full well that it would be dead against her wishes. But ever since the news of Shackleton's return from 87° South had reached him and he had written, 'If only they will leave the South Pole itself alone for a bit they may give me a chance,' he had cherished it as a distant but not impossible hope, little thinking that his hope had been borne in mind by the two men to whom he had expressed it, and who were in the best position to bring it to pass. One of these was Sir Clements Markham,

the promoter of Scott's Expeditions. The other was his old Commandant on the *Worcester*. 'I was at first opposed,' says Sir David, 'to his leaving the hottest quarter of the globe for the coldest'—and in point of fact Bowers on leaving the Gulf was thinner than he had ever been in his life, his weight was down to only 9 stone :—'but his enthusiasm overcame my objections.' He thereupon backed Sir Clements' recommendation by placing Bowers' credentials before Scott personally to such good purpose that the result was a telegram from Scott offering Bowers a place in the *Terra Nova*, without even an interview.

Not only without an interview but also (as his letter will show) without even a direct application on his part. And his appointment when it came, came with dramatic suddenness. Small wonder if he felt (as his letter makes clear he did feel) that an unseen hand was on the tiller of his destiny, a hand that had had the steerage of his course all through, and that would now direct his sail, if need be, over the edge of any horizon within his ken. He was not to know that it would carry him to the world's end, and beyond.

On his arrival at Bombay to present himself at the R.I.M. Office for orders, a brother-officer dashed out of it and said: 'Go in to the Director at once.' This was the first time Bowers had seen Capt. Lumsden, the Director, and thought he looked rather severe, was he in for a wiggling? he wondered. The Director handed him a telegram—'Lt. Bowers' services requisitioned for the Antarctic, if he can be spared'; and then a second cable—'If he can be in London by May 15th, he will be appointed.'

Hardly crediting his senses he heard the Director say, 'Did you apply?' He answered 'no' and tried to explain, expecting a blowing up, but the Director laughed and said: 'I am very pleased indeed that a R.I.M. Officer should be keen on going and feel it is a great compliment to the Service that you have been appointed.'

His mother and his eldest sister were then in Rome. In the elation of his own spirits, and with perhaps in the circumstances a pardonable want of consideration for theirs, he sent them a cable. It fell upon his mother like a thunderbolt. It was the realization of her worst fears: intuitively she sensed it was the end. Yet with the heroism of love she would put no obstacle in his way even in her own extremity, and made preparations to return at once to London with her daughter to meet him on his arrival.

The cable was followed by a letter:

Bombay. *Apr. 9, '10.* I am sure you will be awaiting some explanation of what you will consider a bomb-shell. Well, mother dear, I know how you have stuck out against polar exploration for me, and now I out of 8,000 am appointed without even an application. One can only say it is destiny—it cannot be helped, and had to be. The history of the whole show is this. I had a short note from Sir Clements Markham last August saying this Expedition was under way; he remembered my keenness over the *Discovery* Expedition, and said he would recommend my name to Capt. Scott if I would like. Of course I said I would like, but did not know about the Indian Govt. I sent a private letter then to Capt. Scott saying I should be very keen on going, but must have intimation in time, as I could not officially apply except through the Director. I then had another letter from Sir C. Markham—he said he had done all he could, but Capt. Scott was running his own show.

My next letter was from Capt. Wilson-Barker, saying he had had a letter from Capt. Scott, but there were over 5,000 applicants then—December. ‘However’ (he added) ‘if by any chance you have the extraordinary good fortune to be appointed you may look to me to help you in every way I can.’

Things were still in this state while I was away boat-cruising and I wrote my 3rd and last letter to Evans saying—I have not applied and shall not attempt to do so unless I hear in time. The list of applicants had swelled to 8,000 by this time, and I dropped the matter and did not apply.

On arriving here the Director told me of my appointment and congratulated me, and now cables are flying about like smoke and your son has become a curio. Capt. Hunt is highly pleased and I was dined by the Foxes at the Yacht Club last night. . . . Well, there is the plain unvarnished history of the greatest surprise I have ever had. I went into an office under orders to go to the hottest place in the world, and was under orders to go to the South Pole. The way of man is not in himself—somebody else is directing my ship—I am being impelled, borne forward, for better or worse—God knows. . . . Life is just as precarious up the Gulf, where I was going, as in the Antarctic; in fact the unhealthy and terrible heat will soon be on in the Gulf. Instead of that with its attendant lassitude I am going to do a man’s work, which only a strong man could do. . . . I know you will feel that your son has hardly been fair to his mother; but you will not I am sure blame my acceptance of the opportunity. I never really asked for it.

By the same mail he wrote to Captain Wilson-Barker.

I don’t know how to thank you for getting me appointed to this Expedition. Really I am so surprised and pleased that I can hardly realize it now. It is all settled and the Government of India has approved . . . and in any case I am going South—conditions or no conditions—that is certain, so I don’t mind much about the rest. I was under orders to return to the Persian Gulf when Captain

Scott's telegram arrived. I shall be leaving by the next French mail to Marseilles and should be in London by the 1st May. I shall look forward to seeing you then for what I consider to be the climax in a long succession of kindnesses you have done me. Needless to say I was never keener on anything in my life.

And again to his mother from the home-bound liner :

I do regret that cablegram, but that is no good now. I only hope it did not curtail your stay in Italy—I could have joined you at Marseilles. Perhaps it is better as it is though, as the boat-trains will be crowded. . . . I cannot think how you will have received the news. I can quite understand your saying—why should not mothers with a crowd of sons send one of theirs to a show like this? I know it seems selfish of me to want to go away from you to the ends of the earth. It seemed selfish ever to want to go to sea—and yet I have always known it was impossible to alter. In this case many hundreds of applicants, with much influence behind them, must have been worrying Captain Scott with letters and visits, to be rejected in favour of a paltry half-dozen. . . . This cannot have happened by chance, and since it has happened my whole feeling is one of thankfulness. It will all be over in a couple of years and then you will be glad I went. The Director has given me 3 months' privilege leave, so that if I fail the medical exam. (not a very likely contingency), I shall at least have 6 weeks at home. . . . I am longing to get hold of you, and shall not respect publicity when we meet thus. I simply jump with impatience to get home.

'Home' proved to be London, and its duration a bare five weeks. Crowded as it was with all the bustle of preparation for departure, it was not too crowded to detract a jot of the happiness of his home-coming.

CHAPTER XII

The Voyage South

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the
sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's
shaking,
And a gray mist on the sea's face and a gray dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running
tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that will not be denied ;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls
crying.

I must go down to the seas again to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like
a whetted knife ;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And a quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's
over.

MASEFIELD.

PERHAPS the first impression and the one
that lives longest in the memories of those
who visited the *Terra Nova* in the West
India Dock, is that of a little man in the hold,
rotund of figure and very damp and pink as to his
face, with tunic unbuttoned and peaked cap tilted
back on his head, stowing cases all day long as if his

life depended on it. So assiduous was he in these exertions that when he fell from the deck into the hold it was with no more apparent effect upon his anatomy than if he had been a sack, to judge at least from his uninterrupted pursuit of them ; and of the festivities of the send-off he ' only touched the fringe,' for which he was not sorry : ' I can't bear seeing people crying, and so am keeping clear of them.' Characteristically he never mentioned his bruises in his last letter, but mentioned instead that his hand ached from signing autographs.

The *Terra Nova* sailed from the West India Docks on June 1, 1910, *en route* to Cardiff, with calls at Greenhithe and Portsmouth on the way. Bowers joined her at the latter port of call on the 6th, having made his farewells in London, and wrote to his mother from Stokes Bay. There is no sentiment in his letter, but there is a depth of strong affection, a sincerity as to his faith in life's purposes, and a confidence of good hope which in retrospect makes poignant reading.

I must admit that my journey down to-day was hardly what one might call cheery. Still, life is made up of these things and thus it must go on till we never more shall part and God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes. It seems a strange paradox in nature that those who have many sons may have them always with them, while so often the single ones are taken. My love for you and the desire to remain with you always tempers my natural desire for a roving life which was born in me. As the knowledge that I had to go to sea grew and grew, I always fought it for your sake, but for my own loved it : it was my ' calling.' It had to be, but God has given me the love of it mixed with the bitter that must fill all earthly cups. For you it seems to me that the bitter alone is left, but He knows, and does and will compensate



BOWERS ON BOARD THE *TERRA NOVA*

you. . . . You know at all events that your son loves and honours his mother above all things on earth, and if it must be that we separate for the present God will provide for each one of us in this absence. I am perfectly confident without a shadow of doubt that I shall come back to you as I have gone, no worse and I hope a better man. . . . God bless and keep you, my dearest Mother, till our certain meeting a year or two hence, as we left each other to-day.

Not the least of his causes for thankfulness on his appointment to the Expedition was the fact of being in a sailing ship again—‘A first-rate craft and sails like a witch in spite of her lumping bulk.’ The ship was given the honour of sailing through the lines of the fleet, of the new Dreadnought class, then off Weymouth.

I must say I was never so impressed in my life with hideous strength. The new monsters are ugliness itself, but for sheer diabolical brutality in ship-building some of the Dreadnought cruisers take the cake. The look of them is enough to scare anyone, and when you pass close enough to look into the muzzles of their guns the effect is something to be remembered. Much as I love ships, and especially H.M. Ships, there was something about the look of this squadron that was Satanic. The silence and the mist intensified the effect.

It was primarily as junior officer in charge of stores that Bowers was appointed to the Expedition, and so thoroughly and systematically did he perform his duty that when the stores were eventually unloaded on the Antarctic coast, Scott was able to write : ‘He proves a perfect treasure ; there is not a single case or a single article of any sort which he cannot put his hand on at once.’ He had been allotted the most arduous, most thankless, most difficult, and yet most responsible task of all ; and,

taking it as a matter of course, he made of it a perfect job. Rapidly his shipmates perceived that, despite his modesty and unimpressive demeanour, here was a jewel of the first water. Even before they reached the Cape—‘Certain men,’ writes Cherry-Garrard, ‘had already begun to stand out. . . . Bowers was proving himself the best seaman on board, with an exact knowledge of the whereabouts and contents of every case, box or bale, and with a supreme contempt for heat or cold.’

Bowers was himself sizing up his messmates in the same way, and in a letter dated June 22 (before reaching Madeira) he had already summarized their qualities briefly and appreciatively. But there was one man among them for whom he had a special word of praise, and with whom it is evident that he already felt a special bond—

The person who has most impressed me among us is Dr. Wilson, whom you will remember to have just seen—a tall clean-shaven chap. He is the soundest man we have, a chap whom I would trust with anything. I am sure he is a real Christian—there is no mistaking it—it comes out in everything. Though the chief Scientist he has taken the smallest laboratory : and in everything he will assist anybody and everybody. Of course he has more presence than anybody in the mess, being the oldest and certainly the wisest. He also has his *Discovery* experience, and though he is not ready to talk can be squeezed for information at odd times. People like myself have always got their tongues hanging out for information on the Antarctic, to say nothing of scientific expositions. He is a wonderful artist too. . . .

[Later. *July 10.*] I still think him the pre-eminent chap—the perfect gentleman—the most manly and the finest character in my own sex that I have ever had the privilege to meet. There is no qualifying *but*—about

‘our Bill.’ He is without any *but*s—from any point of view.

This friendship, which stern circumstance was to subject to its severest and extremest test, was mutual from the first. Wilson was not given to the use of superlatives, but it was thus that he wrote of Bowers, after two months’ acquaintance at sea—

Bowers, whom you will remember by sight, a short red-headed thick-set little man with a very large nose, is a perfect marvel of efficiency—but in addition to this he has the most unselfish character I have ever seen in a man anywhere.

There must have been many points of contact between these two. It may readily be imagined that in Wilson’s knowledge of ornithology and entomology, as well as of meteorology, Bowers would find topics of inexhaustible interest to discuss with him; and in ‘this man of infinite kindliness yet infinite reserve’ he was no doubt trying to take the measure of a personality with immense reserves of will-power and endurance. But it was most probably in their unspoken thoughts that the tie was strongest, in the tacit recognition of a spiritual kinship, felt but not expressed, to which the word ‘religious’ scarcely does justice but must serve for the want of a better. Wilson was the older both in years and in depth and breadth of experience, but each must have known instinctively that the other shared the selfsame incommunicable secret. Indeed, many of those long sea-thoughts of Bowers, expressed in his earlier letters, sound like the very echo of Wilson’s own.

Bowers’ description of South Trinidad, with his account of their excursion upon the island and its

nearly fatal ending, has been quoted in full by Cherry-Garrard in *The Worst Journey in the World*. Only such extracts as describe his personal share in it will be given here.

Sunday, 31st July. The past week has been so crowded with incident, really, that I don't know where to start. Getting to land made me long for the mails from you, which are such a feature of getting to port. However, the strange uninhabited island which we visited will have to make up for my disappointment till we get to Cape-town—or rather Simon's Town. Campbell and I sighted S. Trinidad from the fore yardarm on 25th, and on 26th, at first thing in the morning, we crept up to an anchorage in a sea of glass. The S.E. Trades, making a considerable sea, were beating on the eastern sides, while the western was like a mill-pond. The great rocks and hills to over 2,000 feet towered above us as we went in very close in order to get our anchor down, as the water is very deep to quite a short distance from the shore. West Bay was our selection, and so clear was the water that we could see the anchor at the bottom in 15 fathoms. A number of sharks and other fish appeared at once and several birds. Evans wanted to explore, so Oates, Rennick, Atkinson and myself went away with him—pulling the boat. We examined the various landings and found them all rocky and dangerous. There was a slight surf although the sea looked like a mill-pond. We finally decided on a previously unused place, which was a little inlet among the rocks.

There was nothing but rock, but there was a little nook where we decided to try and land. . . .

We all landed as soon as possible. Wilson and Garrard with their guns for birds; Oates with the dogs, and Atkinson with a small rifle; Lillie after plants and geological specimens; Nelson and Simpson along the shore after sea beasts, etc.; and last but not least came the entomological party, under yours truly, with Wright and, later, Evans, as assistants. Pennell joined up with Wilson, so altogether we were ready to 'do' the island. I have taken over the collection of insects for the expedition, as

the other scientists all have so much to do that they were only too glad to shove the small beasts on me. Atkinson is a specialist in parasites ; it is called 'Helminthology.' I never heard that name before. He turns out the interior of every beast that is killed, and being also a surgeon, I suppose the subject must be interesting. White terns abounded on the island. They were ghost-like and so tame that they would sit on one's hat. They laid their eggs on pinnacles of rock without a vestige of nest, and singly. They looked just like stones. I suppose this was a protection from the land-crabs, about which you will have heard. The land-crabs of Trinidad are a byword and they certainly deserve the name, as they abound from sea-level to the top of the island. The higher up the bigger they were. . . . The land-crabs are little short of a nightmare. They peep out at you from every nook and boulder. Their dead staring eyes follow your every step as if to say, 'If only you will drop down we will do the rest.' To lie down and sleep on any part of the island would be suicidal. Of course, Knight had a specially cleared place with all sorts of precautions, otherwise he would never have survived these beasts, which even tried to nibble your boots as you stood—staring hard at you the whole time. One feature that would soon send a lonely man off his chump is that no matter how many are in sight they are all looking at you, and they follow step by step with a sickly deliberation. They are all yellow and pink, and next to spiders seem the most loathsome creatures on God's earth. Talking about spiders—I have to collect them as well as insects. Needless to say I caught them with a butterfly net, and never touched one. Only five species were known before, and I found fifteen or more—at any rate I have fifteen for certain. Others helped me to catch them, of course. Another interesting item to science is the fact that I caught a moth hitherto unknown to exist on the island, also various flies, ants, etc. Altogether it was a most successful day. Wilson got dozens of birds, and Lillie plants, etc. On our return to the landing-place we found to our horror that a southerly swell was rolling in, and great breakers were bursting on the beach. About five P.M. we all collected and looked at the whaler and pram on one side

of the rollers and ourselves on the other. First it was impossible to take off the guns and specimens, so we made them all up to leave for the morrow. Second, a sick man had come ashore for exercise, and he could not be got off; finally, Atkinson stayed ashore with him. The breakers made the most awe-inspiring cauldron in our little nook, and it meant a tough swim for all of us. Three of us swam out first and took a line to the pram, and finally we got a good rope from the whaler, which had anchored well out, to the shore. I then manœuvred the pram, and everybody plunged into the surf and hauled himself out with the rope. All well, but minus our belongings, and got back to the ship; very wet and ravenous was a mild way to put it. During my 12 to 4 watch that night the surf roared like thunder, and the ship herself was rolling like anything, and looked horribly close to the shore. Of course she was quite safe really. It transpired that Atkinson and the seaman had a horrible night with salt water soaked food, and the crabs and white terns which sat and watched them all night, squawking in chorus whenever they moved. It must have been horrible, though I would like to have stayed, and had I known anybody was staying would have volunteered. This with the noise of the surf and the cold made it pretty rotten for them. In the morning, Evans, Rennick, Oates and I, with two seamen and Gran, took the whaler and pram in to rescue the maroons. At first we thought we would do it by a rocket line to the end of the sheer cliff. The impossibility of such an idea was at once evident, so Gran and I went in close in the pram, and hove them lines to get off the gear first. I found the spoon-shaped pram a wonderful boat to handle. You could go in to the very edge of the breaking surf, lifted like a cork on top of the waves, and as long as you kept head to sea and kept your own head, you need never have got on the rocks, as the tremendous back-wash took you out like a shot every time. It was quite exciting, however, as we would slip in close in a lull, and the chaps in the whaler would yell, 'Look out!' if a big wave passed them, in which case you would pull out for dear life. Our first lines carried away, and then, with others, Rennick and I this time took the pram while Atkinson

got as near the edge as safe to throw us the gear. I was pulling, and by watching our chances we rescued the cameras and glasses, once being carried over 12 feet above the rocks and only escaping by the back-wash. Then the luckiest incident of the day occurred, when in a lull we got our sick man down, and I jumped out, and he in, as I steadied the boat's stern. The next minute the boat flew out on the back-wash with the seaman absolutely dry, and I was of course enveloped in foam and blackness two seconds later by a following wave. Twice the day before this had happened, but this time for a moment I thought, 'Where will my head strike?' as I was like a feather in a breeze in that swirl. When I banked it was about 15 feet above, and, very scratched and winded, I clung on with my nails and scrambled up higher. The next wave, a bigger one, nearly had me, but I was just too high to be sucked back. Atkinson and I then started getting the gear down, Evans having taken my place in the pram. By running down between waves we hove some items into the boat, including the guns, and rifles which I went right down to throw. These were caught and put into the boat, but Evans was too keen to save a bunch of boots that Atkinson threw down, and the next minute the pram passed over my head and landed high and dry, like a bridge, over the rocks between which I was wedged. I then scrambled out as the next wave washed her still higher, right over and over, with Evans and Rennick just out in time. The next wave—a huge one—picked her up, and out she bumped over the rocks and out to sea she went, water-logged, with the guns, fortunately, jammed under the thwarts. She was rescued by the whaler, baled out, and then Gran and one of the seamen manned her battered remains again, and we, unable to save the gear otherwise, lashed it to life-buoys, threw it into the sea and let it drift out with the back-wash to be picked up by the pram.

Clothes, watches and ancient guns, rifles, ammunition, birds (dead) and all specimens were, with the basket of crockery and food, soaked with salt water. However, the choice was between that or leaving them altogether, as anybody would have said had they seen the huge rollers breaking among the rocks and washing 30 to 40

feet up with the spray ; in fact, we were often knocked over and submerged for a time, clinging hard to some rock or one of the ropes for dear life. Evans swam off first. Then I was about half an hour trying to rescue a hawser and some lines entangled among the rocks. It was an amusing job. I would wait for a lull, run down and haul away, staying under for smaller waves and running up the rocks like a hare when the warning came from the boat that a series of big ones were coming in. I finally rescued most of it—had to cut off some and got it to the place opposite the boat, and with Rennick secured it and sent it out to sea to be picked up. My pair of brown tennis shoes (old ones) had been washed off my feet in one of the scrambles, so I was wearing a pair of sea-boots—Nelson's, I found—which, fortunately for him, was one of the few pairs saved. The pram came in, and waiting for a back-wash, Rennick swam off. I ran down after the following wave and securing my green hat, which by the bye is a most useful asset, struck out through the boiling, and grabbed the pram safely as we were lifted on the crest of an immense roller. However, we were just beyond its breaking-point, so all was well, and we arrived aboard after eight hours' wash and wetness, and none the worse, except for a few scratches, and yours truly in high spirits. . . .

I am longing to get to the Cape to have your letters and hear all about you. Except for the absence of news, life aboard is much to be desired. I simply love it, and enjoy every day of my existence here. Time flies like anything, and though it must have been long to you, to us it goes like the wind—so different to that fortnight on the passage home from India.

The winds proving unfavourable for a course to Tristan da Cunha, and the weather being stormiest there at this season of the year (winter), it was decided to Bowers' regret to sail straight for the Cape, and he wrote again on August 7 as follows :

All chances of going to Tristan are over, and we are at last booming along with strong Westerlies with the enormous Southern rollers lifting us like a cork on their

crests. We have had a stiff gale and a very high sea, which is now over, though it is still blowing a moderate gale, and the usual crowd of Albatross, Mollymawks, Cape Hens, Cape Pigeons, etc., are following us. These will be our companions down to the South. Wilson's idea is that, as the prevailing winds round the forties are Westerlies, these birds simply fly round and round the world—via Cape Horn, New Zealand and the Cape of Good Hope. We have had a really good opportunity now of testing the ship's behaviour, having been becalmed with a huge beam swell rolling 35° each way, and having stood out a heavy gale with a high sea. In both she has turned up trumps, and really I think a better little sea boat never floated. Compared to the *Loch Torridon*—which was always awash in bad weather—we are as dry as a cork, and never once shipped a really heavy sea. Of course a wooden ship has some buoyancy of herself, and we are no exception. We are certainly an exception for general seaworthiness—if not for speed—and a safer, sounder ship there could not be. The weather is now cool too—cold, some people call it. I am still comfortable in cotton shirts and whites, while some are wearing Shetland gear. Nearly everybody is provided with Shetland things. I am glad you have marked mine, as they are all so much alike. I am certainly as well provided with private gear as anybody, and far better than most, so, being as well a generator of heat in myself, I should be O.K. in any temperature. By the bye Evans and Wilson are very keen on my being in the Western Party, while Campbell wants me with him in the Eastern Party. I have not asked to go ashore, but am keen on anything and am ready to do anything. In fact there is so much going on that I feel I should like to be in all three places at once—East, West and Ship.

At Simonstown the ship's officers were involved in a three-weeks' round of public and social functions from which Bowers among others would have been glad to be spared. It was, however, relieved by pleasanter interludes such as shifting stores from wharf to hold for hours on end in saturating rain ;

invitations to homely picnics from hospitable folk up-country with Cherry-Garrard : ' he is a great pal of mine and so are Oates and Atkinson, we are the peace-loving party and we usually hunt in a quartet ' ; a few days' stay with them at Wynberg ; and, for mental recreation, taking theodolite observations under Pennell's tuition at the Admiralty's magnetic house.

For none of his companions (save Wilson) had he so great a regard as for Pennell. His opinion was shared by all, and especially by Wilson, who is remembered to have remarked on one occasion during the voyage, ' I thought I could work, but I can't keep pace with Pennell.' The services of this brilliant but unassuming young officer were not employed ashore with the landing-party in the Antarctic ; he was in charge of the ship after landing, and was destined to give his life for his country five years later in another way—in H.M.S. *Queen Mary* in the Battle of Jutland.

Bowers wrote of him :

Pennell is a most indefatigable instructor. He never gets fed up and is always ready to give up his own time to teach anybody. He is only 18 months older than I am, and when I think of all he has in his brain I begin to wonder if I know anything at all. His accuracy is extraordinary. He never makes a statement or puts down anything that is not correct. Rather than say anything at random he will profess ignorance. Yet he is no prig and does not mind doing hard work with his hands either. . . . With my practical knowledge and Pennell's marvellous brain, and my shove-along disposition tempered by his feeling of responsibility, I think we shall do much with a minimum of risk. We will not hurry back from the South as when the sea freezing over drives us north we will investigate the islands between New Zealand and the Antarctic circle.

The last sentence indicates that Bowers expected to be appointed as Pennell's assistant navigator from New Zealand to the Antarctic coast and back. He had joined the Expedition hoping for no more than that. At this stage he had no inkling that he would be chosen for the Shore Party, though he may well have cherished a secret hope that he might be.

At Simon's Bay Captain Scott joined the ship. He had preceded it to the Cape for the purpose of enlisting Government aid for the Expedition, and now heartily tired of this mercenary business and wishing to see his crew at work, he changed places with Wilson, requesting him to go ahead and perform the like offices in Australia. This gave Bowers a welcome opportunity to appreciate his Commander.

Scott hits it off well everywhere and is certainly a top-hole leader. He was tremendously pleased with the ship and everything and everybody. There is not one of us whom he does not take a personal interest in. He took me by the arm when he came aboard the other day and began, 'I say, old chap . . .' He will take nothing but a straight answer to his questions and if the job is yours you've *got* to know all about it. He sticks to what he says, knows what he intends to do, and does not change his mind. He is quite a marvel in the insight he has into every branch of science as well as his own job. It will be good to have him with us as a passenger. . . . But losing 'our Bill' is a great blow to all of us. It will be terrible without 'our Bill'—at least we feel so—as he was always the balancing point in the mess.

On the eve of sailing from the Cape to make 'their easting down' Bowers wrote home at length in letters of which the following are extracts and require no comment.

[*To his mother.*] Why did you give me this nature that loves and longs more than anything to be at home, and yet when away at sea glories in the fact. I so love home and the bliss of it all—the house in its quiet setting, the trees and hedges—and the peace above all. Yet my life is cast in the unceasing racket of a ship's routine without peace or privacy and yet revelling in it all. . . . I know well that nobody on this Expedition will be more remembered than your son by his Mother; and yet I think you are glad or will be glad when the whole thing is among the has-beens. . . . I was the first to pick up a nickname—as usual. I was 'Polly' at Sidcup, 'Beakie' at Streatham, 'Kinky' on the *Worcester*, 'Bosun Bill' on the *Dufferin*, 'Nosie' on the *Fox*, and now I am 'Birdie.' They talk of having a 'Mount Birdie' in the Antarctic—a jolly good idea as it would conceal my identity.

[*To his sister.*] . . . You understand very nearly as much about me as I do myself, and I think I know you better than anyone on this round earth. We always touch the right button with each other at each end. I am all alone in the ship—everything is quiet aft, I mean, except the wind in the rigging, and so my thoughts revert at once to those whom I would like most to have with me. . . . The unpleasant parts of life—if ever I have had such—drop out of my picture of the past and leave things only at their best, as they always ought to have been. I forget the hurry, scramble and worry, of my all too short spell at home, and remember only the happy interludes—Church with Mother, and our quiet little evenings in the Strand before going to listen to the music—and these recollections always bring the bright side back. . . .

During this passage from Cape Town to Melbourne, Bowers, in his capacity as junior officer in charge of stores, was frequently called into consultation with Captain Scott and Lieutenant Evans to discuss the restowing of the ship. It was during these conferences that Scott became so impressed with Bowers' mastery of detail as to realize the

desirability—even the necessity—of keeping him in charge of stores at Winter Quarters.

When on October 1, while still at sea, Scott sent for Bowers and told him that he had decided to take him ashore with the landing-party if Bowers would like to come, the recipient of this news felt like ‘turning a somersault in the cabin.’ He must have felt that he was one step nearer to the far-off goal of his hopes. But when he was told that this must be in exchange for Rennick he demurred, saying that he would prefer not to displace anyone. Scott, however, had decided—it was the first of several such decisions that cost his sensitive spirit much to make ; and though Rennick’s disappointment was keen, his congratulations to his substitute were ungrudging.¹ This gallant officer also was destined to give his life for his country in another way : he went down with his ship H.M.S. *Hogue* off the Dogger Bank in September 1914.

Business took Bowers ashore at Melbourne to collect 30 tons of compressed fodder, in company with Oates, who ‘could only find the boots he had coaled in and caused much amusement by boarding the boat bare-footed and donning them on the way.’ Oates (who cared naught for ceremony) caused even more amusement by appearing in the Town Hall the same evening, where the ball was in progress, wearing the same boots. For Bowers this ball was memorable in that it enabled him to renew the old friendships of *Loch Torridon* days ten years before, to find the trio of pretty sisters who were his playmates then as pretty as ever and

¹ *Scott’s Last Expedition*. Appendix, Note 11.

splendid dancing partners, and one married to 'an excellent chap.'

Arrived at Lyttleton Harbour in New Zealand, he was reminded of nothing so much as a Scotch loch, and it gave him a touch of heart-ache. Here he was occupied in stowing gear, by might and main—with 'a strong party of stevedores and scientists, who worked like niggers' to assist. One of his comrades has written: 'Bowers' feat of sorting and restowing not only the stores we had but the numerous other products which are grown in New Zealand . . . was a masterstroke of clear-headedness and organization.' In a long letter to his mother written from Port Chalmers on November 28, the details of this feat are described; these are too full to be quoted, but they reveal the extent of the responsibility with which he was entrusted, and the exertions with which he carried it out. It was at his suggestion that the ponies were installed in the forecastle, and the decision as to what cargo was to be abandoned was largely left to him. By way of an amusing example—

Oates was anxious to procure an expensive linseed meal and Scott was keen on the compressed variety. When my opinion was asked (knowing nothing of horse fodder) I got in a wink from Oates and said I was sure nothing could equal the linseed meal, and to O.'s great delight the motion was carried on the spot.

At length, with all stowed and lashings made as fast and secure as human ingenuity could make them, the *Terra Nova* set sail from Port Chalmers on November 29 for the frozen South. Three days later she was wallowing in the trough of tremendous seas, water-logged, her pumps useless, within an ace of foundering.

The gale sprang up with such rapidity that to shorten sails immediately was necessary but dangerous work—especially the jib. ‘Bowers and four others went out on to the bowsprit, being buried deep in the enormous seas every time the ship plunged her nose into them with great force. It was an education to see him lead those men out into that roaring inferno.’¹

In reading the several accounts of this epic fight with the storm, written by the men who fought it, it is evident that the baling out of the ship by all hands with buckets unceasingly for two days and nights saved the ship, but it is doubtful whether human endurance could have outlasted the strength of the gale much longer. Safety was not secured without another expedient, and it depended on the courage and resource of four men—Lieutenant Evans, Bowers, the Chief Engineer Williams and the ship’s carpenter Davies.

Bowers’ own account has been quoted fully by Cherry-Garrard as being the most vivid, with the reminder that ‘his tendency was always to underestimate difficulties, whether the force of wind in a blizzard, or the troubles of a polar traveller.’ His account, with a few omissions of an impersonal nature, is given here.

In the afternoon of the beginning of the gale I helped make fast the T.G. sails, upper topsails and foresail, and was horrified on arrival on deck to find that the heavy water we continued to ship, was starting the coal bags floating in places. These, acting as battering-rams, tore adrift some of my carefully stowed petrol cases and endangered the lot. I had started to make sail fast at 3 P.M. and it was 9.30 P.M. when I had finished putting

¹ *The Worst Journey*, 1st Edn. Vol. I, p. 98.

on additional lashings to everything I could. So rapidly did the sea get up that one was continually afloat and swimming about. I turned in for two hours and lay awake hearing the crash of the seas and thinking how long those cases would stand it, till my watch came at midnight as a relief. We were under two lower topsails and hove to, the engines going dead slow to assist keeping head to wind. At another time I should have been easy in my mind; now the water that came aboard was simply fearful, and the wrenching on the old ship was enough to worry any sailor called upon to fill his decks with garbage fore and aft. Still 'Risk nothing and do nothing,' if funds could not supply another ship, we simply had to overload the one we had, or suffer worse things down south. The watch was eventful as the shaking up got the fine coal into the bilges, and this mixing with the oil from the engines formed balls of coal and grease which, ordinarily, went up the pumps easily; now however with the great strains, and hundreds of tons on deck, as she continually filled, the water started to come in too fast for the half-clogged pumps to cope with. An alternative was offered to me in going faster so as to shake up the big pump on the main engines, and this I did—in spite of myself and in defiance of the first principles of seamanship. Of course, we shipped water more and more, and only to save a clean breach of the decks did I slow down again and let the water gain. My next card was to get the watch on the hand-pumps as well, and these were choked, too, or nearly so.

Anyhow with every pump—hand and steam—going, the water continued to rise in the stokehold. At 4 A.M. all hands took in the fore lower topsail, leaving us under a minimum of sail. The gale increased to storm force (force 11 out of 12) and such a sea got up as only the Southern Fifties can produce. All the afterguard turned out and the pumps were vigorously shaken up—sickening work as only a dribble came out. We had to throw some coal overboard to clear the after deck round the pumps, and I set to work to rescue cases of petrol which were smashed adrift. I broke away a plank or two of the lee bulwarks to give the seas some outlet as they were right over the level of the rail, and one was constantly on the

verge of floating clean over the side with the cataract force of the backwash. I had all the swimming I wanted that day. Every case I rescued was put on the weather side of the poop to help get us on a more even keel. She sagged horribly and the unfortunate ponies—though under cover—were so jerked about that the weather ones could not keep their feet in their stalls, so great was the slope and strain on their forelegs. Oates and Atkinson worked among them like Trojans, but morning saw the death of one, and the loss of one dog overboard. The dogs, made fast on deck, were washed to and fro, chained by the neck, and often submerged for a considerable time. Though we did everything in our power to get them up as high as possible, the sea went everywhere. The ward-room was a swamp and so were our bunks with all our nice clothing, books, etc. However, of this we cared little, when the water had crept up to the furnaces and put the fires out, and we realized for the first time that the ship had met her match and was slowly filling. Without a pump to suck we started the forlorn hope of buckets and began to bale her out. Had we been able to open a hatch we could have cleared the main pump well at once, but with those appalling seas literally covering her, it would have meant less than 10 minutes to float, had we uncovered a hatch.

The Chief Engineer (Williams) and carpenter (Davies), after we had all put our heads together, started cutting a hole in the engine room bulkhead, to enable us to get into the pump-well from the engine room; it was iron and, therefore, at least a 12 hours' job. Captain Scott was simply splendid, he might have been at Cowes, and to do him and Teddy Evans credit, at our worst strait none of our landsmen who were working so hard knew how serious things were. Capt. Scott said to me quietly—'I am afraid it's a bad business for us—What do you think?' I said we were by no means dead yet, though at that moment, Oates, at peril to his life, got aft to report another horse dead; and more down. And then an awful sea swept away our lee bulwarks clean, between the fore and main riggings—only our chain lashings saved the lee motor sledge then, and I was soon diving after petrol cases. Captain Scott calmly told me that they

'did not matter.'—This was our great project for getting to the Pole—the much advertised motors that 'did not matter'; our dogs looked finished, and horses were finishing, and I went to bale with a strenuous prayer in my heart, and 'Yip-i-addy' on my lips, and so we pulled through that day. We sang and re-sang every silly song we ever knew, and then everybody in the ship later on was put on 2-hour reliefs to bale, as it was impossible for flesh to keep heart with no food or rest. Even the fresh-water pump had gone wrong so we drank neat lime juice, or anything that came along, and sat in our saturated state awaiting our next spell. My dressing gown was my great comfort as it was not very wet, and it is a lovely warm thing.

To make a long yarn short, we found later in the day that the storm was easing a bit and that though there was a terrible lot of water in the ship, which, try as we could, we could not reduce, it certainly had ceased to rise to any great extent. We had reason to hope then that we might keep her afloat till the pump wells could be cleared. Had the storm lasted another day, God knows what our state would have been, if we had been above water at all. You cannot imagine how utterly helpless we felt in such a sea with a tiny ship,—the great expedition with all its hopes thrown aside for its life. God had shown us the weakness of man's hand and it was enough for the best of us—the people who had been made such a lot of lately—the whole scene was one of pathos really. However, at 11 P.M. Evans and I with the carpenter were able to crawl through a tiny hole in the bulkhead, burrow over the coal to the pump-well cofferdam, where, another hole having been easily made in the wood, we got down below with Davy lamps and set to work. The water was so deep that you had to continually dive to get your hand on to the suction. After 2 hours or so it was cleared for the time being and the pumps worked merrily. I went in again at 4.30 A.M. and had another lap at clearing it. Not till the afternoon of the following day, though, did we see the last of the water and the last of the great gale. During the time the pumps were working, we continued the baling till the water got below the furnaces. As soon as we could light up, we did, and got the other pumps

under way, and, once the ship was empty, clearing away the suction was a simple matter. I was pleased to find that after all I had only lost about 100 gallons of the petrol and bad as things had been they might have been worse. . . .

You will ask where all the water came from seeing our forward leak had been stopped. Thank God we did not have that to cope with as well. The water came chiefly through the deck where the tremendous strain—not only of the deck load, but of the smashing seas—was beyond conception. She was caught at a tremendous disadvantage and we were dependent for our lives on each plank standing its own strain. Had one gone we would all have gone, and the great anxiety was not so much the existing water as what was going to open up if the storm continued. We might have dumped the deck cargo, a difficult job at best, but were too busy baling to do anything else. . . .

That Captain Scott's account will be moderate you may be sure. Still, take my word for it, he is one of the best, and behaved up to our best traditions at a time when his own outlook must have been the blackness of darkness. . . .

Under its worst conditions this earth is a good place to live in.

Cherry-Garrard recalls an occasion during the storm when 'Bowers and Campbell were standing upon the bridge, and the ship rolled sluggishly over until the lee combings of the main hatch were under the sea. They watched anxiously and slowly she righted herself, but "she won't do that often," said Bowers. As a rule if a ship gets that far over she goes down.'

When after forty-eight hours the gale had spent its fury 'our one hope,' wrote Bowers (to enable the animals to recover), 'was to get into the pack and away from the reach of the terrible ocean which is your best friend except when you tamper with him

by taking big risks. But even the great old ocean can't do much under so heavy a jacket.'

They little knew how long they would be compelled to remain there. The pure pale glories of that seemingly interminable field of ice were an enchantment to the eye, but an increasing menace to the prospects of the Expedition. Scott's mind was clearest and his pen most lucid at times when disaster threatened, and his record of the three weeks' struggle through the pack is an unconscious masterpiece of descriptive writing. One of his worst fears (besides expenditure of coal) was damage to the structure of the ship from shock in penetrating the solid floes, and he had sometimes occasion to reprimand the officer of the watch for the way he put the ship at the ice. Bowers' middle watch, we are told, especially became famous for these shocks ; yet he never hurt the ship.

He describes the position and prospect in a letter home dated 'Christmas Day, 1910' and addressed 'Hung up in the Pack Ice at the mouth of Ross Sea.'

I am not going to let the festive day slip by without a line to remind you that your wandering male can remember his Mother on these occasions as well as every day. Yes, it is Christmas, and as we are 12 hours early on Greenwich—being near the 180° Meridian—we have got under way with our seasonable festivities as early as most people on this round earth. We are settled down to as much good cheer as can be mustered in view of our rather unfortunate outlook as regards fuel. There is no lack of happiness fore and aft I can assure you, and better feeling in a ship could hardly be found anywhere. Everybody longs for exercise and is constantly looking round for a chance to work if only to keep themselves warm, and everything goes with a tremendous

swing. Capt. Scott, who has to face all the anxiety and worry of things, but never shows it, is splendid ; he is geniality itself, and you could not imagine a more congenial leader or one that inspires more confidence. . . .

Yesterday four of us went off to shoot our Christmas dinner. We all got wet feet and some of us wet breeks. The Adélie Penguin has the curious feature of a light eyelid which gives him an absurdly 'surprised curiosity' appearance. When he sees you he waddles towards you waving his flippers and shouting a guttural Aha or Wahah, and gets most excited if you sing to him. To shoot these wonderful little beggars as they come towards you or stop to bow to each other—looking foolishly serious—is nothing short of murderous. Still, with a gun and a true aim all is over in a second and we must have them for food and specimens. The specimens are always used for food as well, so nothing is wasted. I know of nothing I can think of nicer than well-cooked penguin. . . . Life is full of interest on the dullest day, as well as full of work, and I revel in this feeling fit and never down-hearted. . . . Here we are with much good cheer before us—a snowy day—the wardroom decorated with our sledge-flags—and we all feel that come what may we will keep our Christmas in good old style and thank God for what we have.

His next letter is dated 'New Year's Day, 1911'—that is, only two days after the ship's release from the pack, and within sight of the Antarctic mountains—Sabine, Whewell, and the Admiralty Range.

. . . As if the Old Year had not done with us we got a stiff S^{ly} gale lasting 30 and 31 December. It only took off at midnight, when I mounted the bridge. The sky had cleared and the midnight sun was brilliantly shining at just on the stroke of 8 bells. The view was lovely beyond description, and all our troubles seem to have fizzled out with the glad New Year and the anticipation of actually landing. I cannot give you an idea of the beauty of a clear southern day. The atmosphere is so clear and sharp that the very air seems permeated with

vitality. The inhospitable mountains look from the distance inviting and grand beyond conception, and the sea itself is as blue as in the Tropics, with glittering icebergs here and there. Yesterday with the rigging hung with long icicles and the air filled with driving snow, it was a different scene. However as I always say, human nature forgets the cloud and rejoices in the silver lining, and at present we have not a cloud metaphorical or otherwise in the sky. . . . You will remember my old green hat. I have worn no other hat or cap hitherto since leaving home (except in uniform or when in port). It is quite a feature of the Expedition now, and has been as useful in the Tropics as here, and in the rains of the Doldrums as in the blizzards of the Pack. I wear it thus [sketched] with a chin-strap.

He goes on to speculate on the possibilities of selection for the Polar Journey, and the last four to be chosen on the march for the dash to the Pole itself, and concludes that as far as his own chances go the most he can hope for is to lead the last supporting party back to the Base: but 'a frost-bitten toe or *nose* might upset all these calculations.'

However, if my duty takes me back before the last eight I shall go every step with the fixed decision that no one has a right to put self in any way before the well-being of the party and the great object in view: to do one's best only to make the Expedition a success. Beyond that I will not let my thoughts go, except to say that by no fault of mine will I be unfit when I am needed. I am more convinced than ever that getting to the Pole is going to be no easy matter—though experience and improvements and especially using skis will greatly minimize risks if not remove them—one must remember the forces of nature and not imagine that a glorified picnic is ahead.

CHAPTER XIII

The Dépôt Journey

In a way this book is a sequel to the friendship which there was between Wilson, Bowers and myself, which, having stood the strain of the Winter Journey, could never have been broken. Between the three of us we had a share in all the big journeys and bad time which came to Scott's main landing-party, and what follows is, particularly, our unpublished diaries, letters and illustrations. I, we, have tried to show how good the whole thing was—and how bad.

CHERRY-GARRARD (From the Preface to the
1st edition of *The Worst Journey in the World*).

THE disembarkation was effected with remarkable dispatch at Cape Evans on January 4, 1911, and for a week all hands laboured with a will from 5 a.m. to midnight, landing stores, and erecting the hut and pony-shelters. It is safe to say that no man of them all worked harder than the stores-keeper, who 'as usual knew just where everything was, and where it was to go.' 'Every day,' wrote Scott, 'he conceives or carries out some plan to benefit the camp.' He had kept as fit as he could throughout the voyage for this purpose, and one of his methods of doing so was peculiar to himself. A couple of days before landing Scott notes in his diary: 'The deck bathing habit has fallen off since we crossed the Antarctic circle, but Bowers has kept going in all

weathers.' Ponting in his book, *The Great White South*, describes the process thus :

Every morning before breakfast the spartan Bowers would undergo a stoical ordeal on the poop. A small hand-pump, with which he and others had been wont regularly to raise water for their matutinal shower, was now frozen and a mass of icicles. Not to be done, however, out of his daily mortifying of the flesh, Bowers would cast a bucket over astern, and hauling it aboard full of icy water and slush, would upset it, or persuade a comrade to upset it, over his nude anatomy, and then repeat the process. After these acts of self-affliction, Bowers—who normally differed from the rest of his shipmates by the remarkable pinkness of his skin—would exhibit a fiery glow from head to foot.

With the exception of Wilson, Atkinson, and Nelson, who had also kept up occasional fresh-air ablutions after entering the pack-ice, such methods now lacked attraction for the rest of us.¹

He had need of all his resources of muscle and nerve in the adventure that lay immediately ahead of him. This was the Dépôt Journey, the purpose of which was to lay stores from Hut Point (the *Discovery* Expedition's old base) to the farthest possible point on the Great Ice Barrier, as provision for the Polar Party on the last stages of their return from the Pole next year. This was undertaken with dogs and ponies, and it was typical of Bowers—the shortest member of the Expedition—that he had chosen the largest pony as his special charge. The start was made on January 25.

¹ In midwinter these ablutions were continued regularly and still more rigorously by Wilson and Bowers alone. On waking each morning they would rub themselves down in the Hut with handfuls of snow. They were occasionally joined by Atkinson.

My most vivid recollection of the day we started is the sight of Bowers, out of breath, very hot, and in great pain from a bad knock which he had given his knee against a rock, being led forward by his big pony Uncle Bill, over whom temporarily he had but little control. He had been left behind in the camp, giving last instructions about the storage of cases and management of provisions, and had practically lost himself in trying to follow us over what was then unknown ground. He was wearing all the clothing which was not included in his personal gear, for he did not think it fair to give the pony the extra weight. He had bruised his leg in an ugly way, and for many days he came to me to bandage it. He was afraid that if he let the doctors see it they would forbid him to go forward. He had had no sleep for seventy-two hours.¹

Before the start was made Scott discussed the arrangements with Bowers, and remarked : ' He is a perfect treasure, enters into one's ideas at once, and evidently thoroughly understands the principle of the game.'

The fortunes of the travellers on their outward journey to the point on the Barrier named One Ton Dépôt cannot be followed in detail here. Thirteen men started and were divided into three parties, but two men were soon obliged to return on account of an injury to one of them, and later four others on account of the weakening of some of the ponies—due to the effects of a three-days' blizzard.²

On February 13, there is this entry in Scott's journal :

¹ Cherry-Garrard.

² This blizzard proved in the event to be a contributory cause of the final disaster. For, had it not occurred, the party could have advanced many miles further and established this large Dépôt within reach of the returning Polar Party before it had irremediably weakened.

Bowers is wonderful. Throughout the night [night marching was the rule on this journey] he has worn no head-gear but a common green felt hat kept on with a chin-strap and affording no cover whatever for the ears. His face and ears remain bright red. The rest of us were glad to have thick Balacclavas and wind helmets. I have never seen anyone so unaffected by the cold. To-night he remained outside a full hour after the rest of us had got into the tent. He was simply pottering about the camp doing small jobs to the sledges, etc.

But alas, three days later, that is the day before arrival at One Ton Dépôt, the inevitable penalty was exacted :

Bowers started out as usual in his small felt hat, ears uncovered. Luckily I called a halt after a mile and looked at him. His ears were quite white. Cherry and I nursed them back whilst the patient seemed to feel nothing but intense surprise and disgust at the mere fact of possessing such unruly organs.

The following extracts are from his home-letters written during halts, and sent back by his returning companions.

One has to be very careful of the glare and constantly wear goggles on the march. Most chaps wear green, but I find amber suits my green eyes best [his eyes were really light brown flecked with gray], and Wilson keeps a stock of all shades.

The advantage of being plump down here is tremendous as you keep warm when others are perished—at least I do—and on a long journey you draw on your supply and don't come down to skin and bone till weeks after the lean ones have their clothes hanging on them like sacks.

In a tent too I think it is an advantage not to be too tall. You can fit into a corner and sleep in comfort where a big man would be cramped.

In this land of wonderful desolation and grandeur one has the strange feeling that appeals so much to the roving mind. The gateway to the South shining in the distance

and the specks of men only visible a few miles at most, plodding on. I simply revel in the life for its own sake. The delicious feeling of having earned one's meals and rest—no worry now—only marching, observing, navigating, grooming, cooking, etc.—living out one's full allowance of time under conditions that fulfil one's ideas of manliness. . . . You may be sure of one thing, that though I may not get to the Pole, I shall do much towards the object in hand and the honour of my Mother who deserves to have something better than a rolling-stone for a son. All's well for a start—the finish is in the hands of a higher power.

The depleted party of seven was eventually divided into two: Scott, Meares and Wilson with the dog-teams being joined by Cherry-Garrard, while Oates with Bowers and Gran were detailed to bring back the remaining ponies. They separated for the return journey, since the dog-teams far outstripped the ponies. The account of the return of the pony-party must be told in Bowers' own words, not only for its own interest, but also because it is one of the most vivid pictures on record of the conditions of sledge travelling in the Antarctic.

As our loads were so light Titus [Oates] thought it would be better for the ponies to do their full march in one stretch and so have a longer rest. We, therefore, decided to forgo lunch and have a good meal on camping. The recent trails were fresh enough to follow and so saved us steering by compass, which is very difficult as the needle will only come to rest after you have been standing still for about a minute. That march was extraordinary, the snowy mist hid all distant objects and made all close ones look gigantic. Although we were walking on a flat undulating plain, one could not get away from the impression that the ground was hilly—quite steep in places with deep hollows by the wayside. Suddenly a herd of apparent cattle would appear in the distance, then you would think: 'No, it's a team of dogs broken loose

and rushing towards you.' In another moment one would be walking over the black dots of some old horse droppings which had been the cause of the hallucinations. Since then I have often been completely taken in by appearances under certain conditions of light, and the novelty has worn off. Sastrugi are the hard waves formed by wind on a snow surface ; these are seldom more than a foot or so in height, and often so obscured as to be imperceptible irregularities. On this occasion they often appeared like immense ridges until you walked over them. After going about 10 miles we spotted a tiny black triangle in the dead white void ahead, it was over a mile away and was the lunch camp of the dogs. We were fairly close before they broke camp and hurriedly packed up. I thought they looked rather sheepish at having been caught up, like the hare and the tortoise again. Still we had been marching very quickly and Scott was delighted to see Weary Willie going so well. They then dashed off, and after completing just over 12 miles we reached Pagoda Cairn where a bale of fodder had been left.

Here we camped and threw up our walls as quickly as possible to shelter the beasts from the cold wind. Weary was the most annoying, he would deliberately back into his wall and knock the whole structure down. In the case of my own pony, I had to put the wall out of his reach as his aim in life was to eat it, generally beginning at the bottom. He would diligently dislodge a block, and bring down the whole fabric. One cannot be angry with the silly beggars—Titus says a horse has practically no reasoning power, the thing to do is simply to throw up another wall and keep on at it.

The weather cleared during the night, and the next day, February 19, we started off under ideal conditions, the sun was already dipping pretty low, marks easy to pick up, and on this occasion we could plainly see a cairn over seven miles away, raised by the mirage ; the only trouble about seeing things so far off is that they take such an awful time to reach. Mirage is a great feature down here and one of the most common of optical phenomena on the Barrier ; it is often difficult to persuade oneself that open water does not lie ahead. We passed the scene of Weary Willie's fight with the dogs during the march and also had

an amusing argument as to a dark object on the snow ahead. At first we thought it was the dog camp again, but it turned out to be an empty biscuit tin, such is the deceptive nature of the light. Later we sighted our old blizzard camp and decided to utilize the walls again. Weary Willie was decidedly worse and had to be literally jumped along by the pony to which he was attached. Within half a mile of the walls Weary refused to go farther, and after wasting some time in vain efforts to urge him on we had to camp where we were, having only done $10\frac{1}{2}$ miles. This was very sad, but I took hope from the fact that Titus, who is usually pretty pessimistic, had not yet given up hopes of getting him back alive. He had an extra whack of oats at the expense of the other ponies, and my big beast made up for his shortage by hauling the sledge towards him with his tethered leg, and forcing his nose into our precious biscuit tank, out of which he helped himself liberally at our expense. The sledges were now too light to anchor the animals, so we had to peg them down with anything we could and bank them up with snow.

Weary was better the next day (February 20) but we decided at the outset to go no farther than the Bluff Camp where we had left some fodder. This was barely 10 miles off, yet my old animal showed signs of lassitude before the end; there was nothing alarming, however, and we saw the *dépôt* over five miles off which interested the beasts, who see these things and somehow connect them, in the backs of their silly old heads, with food and rest. Weary Willy made a decided improvement, so we camped in high spirits. Captain Scott has asked me if possible to take some theodolite observations for the determination of the position of Bluff Camp. Ours is much farther off, and farther beyond the Bluff than the old Discovery *Dépôt* A, which was practically the same position Shackleton used. In both cases, Scott and Shackleton were keeping nearer the coast; now, however, that the Beardmore has been discovered we can aim straight for that, which takes one farther east by at least 15 miles off the Bluff. This is rather an advantage, I think, as close in to this remarkable headland the onward movement of the Barrier arrested by the immovable hills causes a terrific chaos of crevasses off the cliffs at the end. These

extend many miles and include some chasms big enough to take the *Terra Nova* all standing. Needless to remark, one is well clear of this sort of scenery with ponies—hence our course. I was unable to get any observations, unfortunately, as it clouded over almost at once and later in the day started to snow without wind. This often happens before a bliz, and as we were anxious about the ponies, to say nothing of our own shortage of biscuit, we felt a trifle apprehensive. It was very gloomy when we left camp at midnight, as the midnight sun was already cartwheeling the southern horizon, the first sign of autumn, also the season had undoubtedly broken up, and the sky was covered with low stratus clouds as thick as a hedge. We lost sight of the cairn almost at once and followed the remains of old tracks for a little while till the snowy gloom made it impossible to see them. You will remember that it was at the Bluff Camp that Teddy Evans returned with the three weak ponies, so there were plenty of traces of our march now. Just on four miles from the start I saw a small mound some distance to the west, and struck over there ; it was a small cairn without the signs of a camp and rather puzzled me at the time. As I shall mention it later I will call it X for convenience. We then pushed on and I found steering most difficult. In the fuzzy nothingness ahead one could see no point on which to fix the eye, and the compass required standing still to look at it every time. Our sledging compasses are spirit ones, and as steady as a small hand-compass could possibly be. You will understand, however, that owing to the proximity of the Magnetic Pole the pull on the needle is chiefly downwards. It is forced into a horizontal position by a balancing weight on the N. side, so it is obvious that its direction power is greatly reduced. On the ship, owing to the vibration of the engines and the motors, we were absolutely unable to steer by the compass at all when off the region of the Magnetic Pole.

On this occasion (February 21) we zigzagged all over the place—first I went ahead, and Oates said I zigzagged, then he went ahead, and I understood at once, as it was impossible to walk straight for two consecutive minutes. However, we plodded along with frequent stoppages till the wind came away, and then having determined the

direction of that, steered by keeping the snow on our backs. The wind was not strong enough to be unpleasant, and all was well. We legged it into the void for nearly seven miles beyond X Cairn when I suddenly found myself only a few yards away from another cairn. This shows that somehow, without the use of tracks or landmarks, we had marched seven miles without being able to see thirty yards, and had yet hit off the direct track to a T; of course, it was only coincidence, though some people might credit themselves with superlative navigating powers on such evidence. The wind increased, and with the knowledge I now have of blizzards I would camp at once. Then I thought it better to shove on, as the ponies were marching splendidly. The danger lay in the fact that though it is easy enough for you to march with the wind behind, you can't march for ever, and you will probably get tired before the wind does. Camping in a stiff breeze is always difficult, to say nothing of a gale; and for three men with five ponies to manage would be wellnigh impossible. Fortunately for us this was not really a blizzard, though it was quite near enough to one. The sky broke later and showed the Bluff and White Island, and then the scurrying clouds of drift would encircle us to break again and come on again.

After having done seventeen miles we got a lull and stopped to camp right away. We were pretty quick about it, and fortunately got the ponies picketed, and tent pitched, before the wind came down on us again. We were pretty hungry by the time the walls were erected. Still we were quite happy, ate everything we could get, except the three lumps of sugar I always kept for old Uncle Bill out of my whack. The little blow blew itself out towards evening and in perfect calm and sunshine I got a splendid set of observations. Erebus and Terror were showing up as clear as a bell and I got a large number of angles for Evans' survey. We started out as usual, and had the most pleasant, as well as the longest, of our return marches on the last day of summer, February 22. We did eighteen miles right off the reel, the sun was brilliant from midnight onwards. He now half immersed himself below the horizon for a short interval once in 24 hours. All old cairns were visible a tremendous

distance, six or seven miles at least for big ones. Mount Terror lay straight ahead and looked so clear that it seemed impossible to imagine it 70 miles away. At the end of our march we saw a small cairn beyond our 8th outward camp mound. Nobody would have rigged up another cairn so close without an object, so the thought of a dead horse flashed through my mind at once. Titus was so sure that Blucher would never get back, that he had bet Gran a biscuit on it. I saw the cairn had a fodder bale on the top, and later saw a note made fast to the wire. It was in Teddy Evans' handwriting and to our surprise recorded Blossom's death. Titus was so sure that Blossom would survive Blucher that we started to think back and thus the mystery of X Cairn was clear to me. I was quite certain now that both the ancient ponies had died and that Jimmy Pigg had returned alone. The following day (February 23) was a good marching day also but a bit cloudy latterly. . . . February 24 was another march into impenetrable gloom. Fortunately Corner Camp, though dark enough, was not shrouded in mist. . . . We overslept and so did not get away till the afternoon. It was still very cloudy and threatening. I found that I had steered considerably to the southward of the right direction in the fog, and it is lucky we met with no crevasses off White Island. Safety Camp at last appeared, and the last four miles seemed interminable. We had given the animals their last feed before starting, not a particle remained, but they stuck it. The surface was very heavy. Once, however, that they had seen the camp they never stopped. I suppose they knew they were nearly home. We marched in about 9.30 P.M. I said 'Thank God' when I looked at the weather, and the empty sledges. The dogs were in camp, also the dome tent (we had some tents shaped like a dome in addition to those we used for sledging), out of which Uncle Bill (the real 'Uncle Bill Wilson') and Meares emerged. We soon had the ponies behind walls and well fed, borrowed their primus for ourselves, and had a square meal of pemmican and biscuit with fids of seal liver in it.

The return of Captain Scott with the dog-teams was a chapter of accidents which provided (in

Wilson's words) 'a piece of education on an impressive scale.' First, the collapse of one of the teams in a crevasse from which the dogs were with great difficulty extricated, but some of them injured beyond recovery : then the report of the death of two ponies from exhaustion on the march, and the poor condition of most of the rest ; then, the apparent disappearance of the two men who had first returned ; marches and counter-marches in very bleak weather between Safety Camp, Hut Point, and Corner Camp ; and, to crown these adversities, news from Campbell—that the ship had found Amundsen and his *Fram* in the Bay of Whales. The events that were done with were grim enough, but the anxieties and apprehensions to which present uncertainties gave rise must have been beyond bearing when to them was added the last catastrophe—three men marooned on a drifting ice-floe and in imminent danger of death from Killer Whales.

A few words must suffice to explain how this came about. Having retrieved the scattered personnel of his whole party Scott reorganized at Safety Camp, with a view to making as speedily as possible across the sea-ice by way of Cape Armitage to the shelter of Hut Point. He sent off Meares and Wilson with the dog-teams first, but had much difficulty in harnessing the now-exhausted ponies. Bowers and his pony were ready first and started away alone in the track of the dog-teams ; Cherry-Garrard and seaman Gran with three more ponies followed a little later ; but the pony 'Weary Willie' was found to be too sick to travel. Scott remained with Oates and Gran in a forlorn attempt

to nurse the poor animal back to life. Bowers with the two men who had joined him therefore proceeded across the sea-ice unaware that Scott had been obliged to camp. Their sledges were heavy, from previous observations they knew that the sea-ice was shaky, and when several ominous cracks in it appeared, Bowers decided to take no risks. He turned far inwards from off the cracking ice on to what he knew to be old sound ice, threw up pony walls, and camped. Two and a half hours later he awoke to find himself and his party marooned on a floe. Something entirely without precedent had happened: the sea-ice had broken up all round the strait.

In his diary Scott briefly summarizes the desperate situation of these three men under the heading *Bowers' Incident*, and continues:

'I note the events of the night of March 1 whilst they are yet fresh in my memory.' It is small wonder that he added: 'The events of the past 48 hours bid fair to wreck the Expedition, and the only one comfort is the miraculous avoidance of loss of life . . .' In the stress of events he had no time to write more than a couple of pages, but fortunately Bowers has told the full tale himself.

. . . I cannot describe either the scene or my feelings. I must leave those to your imagination. We were in the middle of a floating pack of broken-up ice. The tops of the hills were visible, but all below was thin mist and as far as the eye could see there was nothing solid; it was all broken up, and heaving up and down with the swell. Long black tongues of water were everywhere. The floe on which we were had split right under our picketing line, and cut poor Guts' wall in half. Guts himself had gone, and a dark streak of water alone showed the place where the ice had opened under him. The two sledges

securing the other end of the line were on the next floe and had been pulled right to the edge. Our camp was on a floe not more than 30 yards across. I shouted to Cherry and Crean, and rushed out in my socks to save the two sledges; the two floes were touching farther on and I dragged them to this place and got them on to our floe. At that moment our own floe split in two, but we were all together on one piece. I then got my finnesko on, remarking that we had been in a few tight places, but this was about the limit. I have been told since that I was quixotic not to leave everything and make for safety. You will understand, however, that I never for one moment considered the abandonment of anything.

We packed up camp and harnessed up our ponies in remarkably quick time. When ready to move I had to decide which way to go. Obviously towards Cape Armitage was impossible, and to the eastward also, as the wind was from that direction, and we were already floating west towards the open sound. Our only hope lay to the south, and thither I went. We found the ponies would jump the intervals well. At least Punch would and the other two would follow him. My idea was never to separate, but to get everything on to one floe at a time, and then wait till it touched or nearly touched another in the right direction, and then jump the ponies over and drag the four sledges across ourselves. In this way we made slow, but sure progress. While one was acting all was well, the waiting for a lead to close was the worst trial. Sometimes it would take 10 minutes or more, but there was so much motion in the ice that sooner or later bump you would go against another piece, and then it was up and over. Sometimes they split, sometimes they bounced back so quickly that only one horse could get over, and then we had to wait again. We had to make frequent detours and were moving west all the time with the pack, still we were getting south, too.

Very little was said. Crean, like most bluejackets, behaved as if he had done this sort of thing often before. Cherry, the practical, after an hour or two dug out some chocolate and biscuit, during one of our enforced waits, and distributed it. I felt at that time that food was the last thing on earth I wanted, and put it in my pocket; in

less than half an hour, though, I had eaten the lot. The ponies behaved as well as my companions, and jumped the floes in great style. After getting them on a new floe we simply left them, and there they stood chewing at each others' head ropes or harness till we were over with the sledges and ready to take them on again. Their implicit trust in us was touching to behold. A 12-foot sledge makes an excellent bridge if an opening is too wide to jump. After some hours we saw fast ice ahead, and thanked God for it. Meanwhile a further unpleasantness occurred in the arrival of a host of the terrible 'killer' whales. These were reaping a harvest of seal in the broken-up ice, and cruised among the floes with their immense black fins sticking up, and blowing with a terrific roar. The Killer is scientifically known as the Orca, and, though far smaller than the sperm and other large whales, is a much more dangerous animal. He is armed with a huge iron jaw and great blunt socket teeth. Killers act in concert, too, and, as you may remember, nearly got Ponting when we were unloading the ship, by pressing up the thin ice from beneath and splitting it in all directions.

It took us over six hours to get close to the fast ice, which proved to be the Barrier, some immense chunks of which we actually saw break off and join the pack. Close in, the motion was less owing to the jamming up of the ice somewhere farther west. We had only just cleared the Strait in time though, as all the ice in the centre, released beyond Cape Armitage, headed off into the middle of the Strait, and thence to the Ross Sea. Our spirits rose as we neared the Barrier edge, and I made for a big sloping floe which I expected would be touching; at any rate I anticipated no difficulty. We rushed up the slope towards safety, and were little prepared for the scene that met our eyes at the top. All along the Barrier face a broad lane of water from thirty to forty feet wide extended. This was filled with smashed-up brash ice, which was heaving up and down to the swell like the contents of a cauldron. Killers were cruising there with fiendish activity, and the Barrier edge was a sheer cliff of ice on the other side fifteen to twenty feet high. It was a case of so near and yet so far. Suddenly our great sloping floe calved in two, so we beat a hasty retreat. I selected a

sound-looking floe just clear of this turmoil, that was at least 10 feet thick, and fairly rounded, with a flat surface. Here we collected everything and having done all that men could do, we fed the beasts and took counsel.

Cherry and Crean both volunteered to do anything, in the spirit they had shown right through. It appeared of first necessity to communicate with Captain Scott. I guessed his anxiety on our behalf, and, as we could do nothing more, we wanted help of some sort. It occurred to me that a man working up to windward along the Barrier face might happen upon a floe touching [the Barrier]. It was obviously impossible to take ponies up there anywhere, but an active man might wait his opportunity. Going to windward, too, he could always retreat on to our floes, as the ice was being pushed together in our direction. The next consideration was, whom to send. To go myself was out of the question. The problem was whether to send one, or both, my companions. As my object was to save the animals and gear, it appeared to me that one man remaining would be helpless in the event of the floe splitting up, as he would be busy saving himself. I therefore decided to send one only. This would have to be Crean, as Cherry, who wears glasses, could not see so well. Both volunteered, but as I say, I thought out all the pros and cons and sent Crean, knowing that, at the worst, he could get back to us at any time. I sent a note to Captain Scott, and, stuffing Crean's pockets with food, we saw him depart.

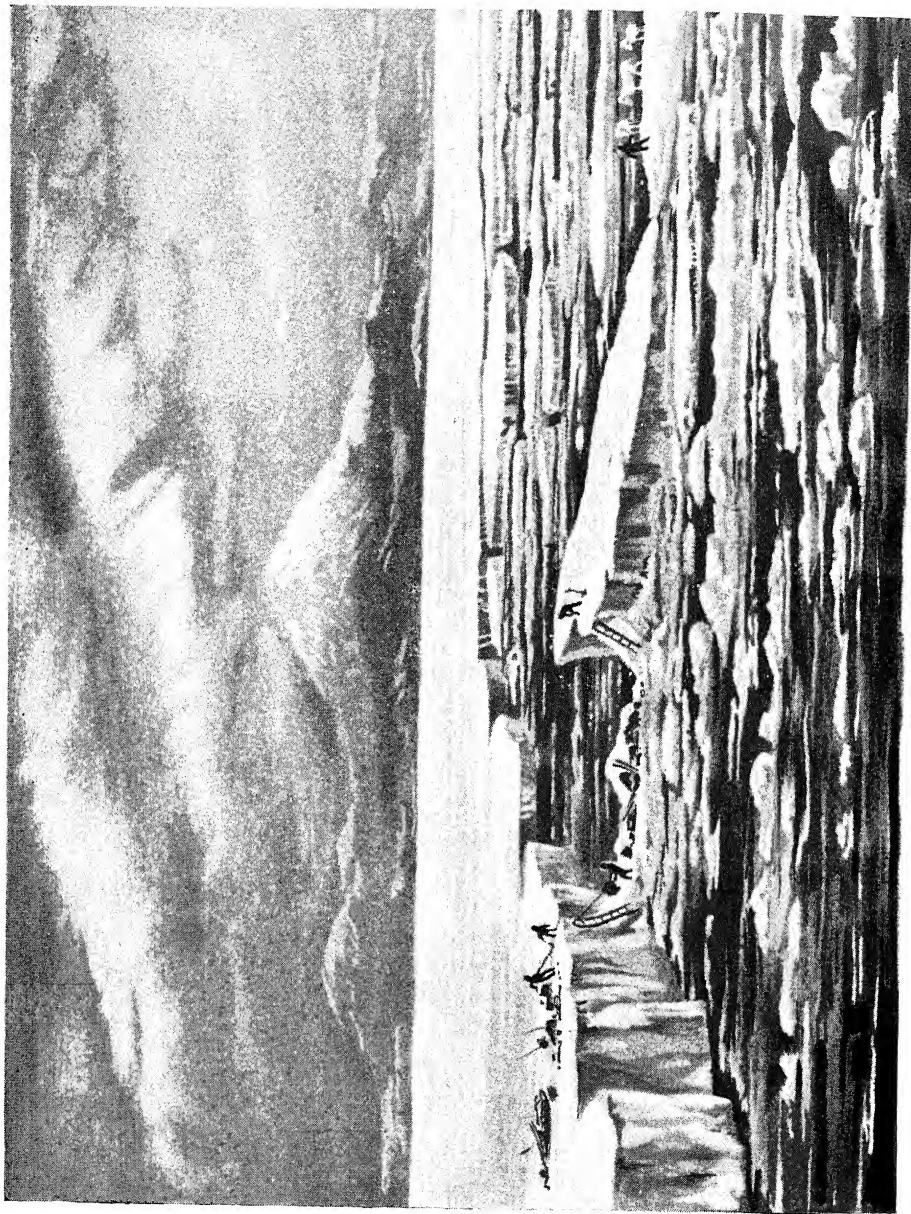
Practical Cherry suggested pitching the tent as a mark of our whereabouts, and having done this I mounted the theodolite to watch Crean through the telescope. The rise and fall of the floe made this difficult, especially as a number of Emperor penguins came up and looked just like men in the distance. Fortunately the sunlight cleared the frost smoke, and as it fell calm our westerly motion began to decrease. The swell started to go down. Outside us, in the centre of the Strait, all the ice had gone out, and open water remained. We were one of a line of loose floes floating near the Barrier edge. Crean was hours moving to and fro before I had the satisfaction of seeing him up on the Barrier. I said: 'Thank God one of us is out of the wood, anyhow.'

It was not a pleasant day that Cherry and I spent all alone there, knowing as we did that it only wanted a zephyr from the south to send us irretrievably out to sea ; still there is satisfaction in knowing that one has done one's utmost, and I felt that having been delivered so wonderfully so far, the same Hand would not forsake us at the last.

We gave the ponies all they could eat that day. The Killers were too interested in us to be pleasant. They had a habit of bobbing up and down perpendicularly, so as to see over the edge of a floe, in looking for seals. The huge black and yellow heads with sickening pig eyes only a few yards from us at times, and always around us, are among the most disconcerting recollections I have of that day. The immense fins were bad enough, but when they started a perpendicular dodge they were positively beastly. As the day wore on skua gulls, looking upon us as certain carrion, settled down comfortably near us to await developments. The swell, however, was getting less and less and it resolved itself into a question of speed, as to whether the wind or Captain Scott would reach us first.

Crean had got up into the Barrier at great risks to himself as I gathered afterwards from his very modest account. He had reached Captain Scott some time after his (Scott's) meeting with Wilson. I heard that at the time Captain Scott was very angry with me for not abandoning everything and getting away safely myself. For my own part I must say that the abandoning of the ponies was the one thing that had never entered my head. It was a long way round, but at 7 P.M. he arrived at the edge of the Barrier opposite us with Oates and Crean. Everything was still, and Cherry and I could have got on safe ice at any time during the last half-hour by using the sledge as a ladder. A big overturned fragment had jammed in the lane, between a high floe and the Barrier edge, and, there being no wind, it remained there. However, there was the consideration of the ponies, so we waited.

Scott, instead of blowing me up, was too relieved at our safety to be anything but pleased. I said : ' What about the ponies and the sledges ? ' He said : ' I don't care a damn about the ponies and sledges. It's you I want, and



THE RESCUE FROM THE SEA-ICE, MARCH 1, 1911
By kind permission of Mrs. Wilson

Dr. E. A. Wilson, del.

I am going to see you safe here up on the Barrier before I do anything else.' Cherry and I had got everything ready, so, dragging up two sledges, we dumped the gear off them, and using them as ladders, one down from the berg on to the buffer piece of ice, and the other up to the top of the Barrier, we got up without difficulty. Captain Scott was so pleased, that I realized the feeling he must have had all day. He had been blaming himself for our deaths, and here we were very much alive. He said : ' My dear chaps, you can't think how glad I am to see you safe—Cherry likewise.'

I was all for saving the beasts and sledges, however, so he let us go back and haul the sledges on to the nearest floe. We did this one by one and brought the ponies along, while Titus dug down a slope from the Barrier edge in the hope of getting the ponies up it. Scott knew more about ice than any of us, and realizing the danger we didn't, still wanted to abandon things. I fought for my point tooth and nail, and got him to concede one article and then another, and still the ice did not move till we had thrown and hauled up every article on to the Barrier except the two ladders and the ponies.

All the members of the party being now, to Scott's inexpressible relief, safe and reunited, the course was at once set for Hut Point with the dogs and two surviving ponies (out of eight taken), for much-needed rest and recuperation. The ice having broken up between the Hut and their base at Cape Evans, they were obliged to remain in this comfortless dwelling (but with the greatest good fellowship and content) till the sea should freeze over—in fact, nearly a month. But during this spell of comparative relaxation the restlessly active Bowers would seem to have been as much outside the Hut as in it. On March 8 he led a party back to ' Disaster Camp ' to retrieve the material left there after the rescue : ' I found a steady plod up a steep hill without spells is better and less exhausting

than a rush and a number of rests. This theory I put into practice with great success. . . . After the second sledge was up Atkinson said : " I don't mind you as a rule, but there are times when I positively hate you." ' Again on the 16th he went out with Oates, Atkinson, and Cherry-Garrard, forming one of two sledge-teams to ' Corner Camp ' with provisions to increase the supply already dumped there. The weather was cold and thick, the surface crevassed in places, and the journey there and back took eight days.

Nor was he less active within and around the Hut. Two episodes will serve to reveal the way in which by his comic whimsicality he successfully covered up his unselfishness. When the community was increased by the arrival of the Geological Party on the 14th, he joined Wilson to assist them in rock-chipping.

The activities of the geologists incited all the other officers to emulation. Bowers was the most indefatigable of these ' pseudo-scientists,' and was always bringing along some huge specimen to Debenham or myself. ' Here you are,' Birdie would say of a particularly uninteresting block, ' here's a gabbroid nodule impaled in basalt with felspar and olivine rampant.' ¹

And again in the capacity of cook (the staple diet of the Hut was biscuit and seal-blubber) :

On April 1 Bowers prepared to make a fool of two of us by putting chaff in our pannikins and covering the top only with seal meat. The plan turned back upon the maker, for he had not enough left to make up the deficiency, and, as I found out many weeks afterwards, surreptitiously gave up his own hoosh to the April fools and went without himself. Of such are the small

¹ Griffith Taylor. *With Scott—The Silver Lining*, p. 199.

incidents which afforded real amusement and even live in the memory as outstanding features of our existence.¹

On April 11 he was included in the party which, under Scott, made a bid for Cape Evans by an untried route, leaving Wilson, Oates, Atkinson, Meares and Cherry-Garrard in charge of the animals till the ice should hold. His account of this journey is given in full in *The Worst Journey*. It was accomplished at some peril with a variety of hazards across thin sea-ice, and through a blizzard. Arrived at Cape Evans,

I at once looked out the other big Siberian horse that had been a pair with my late lamented, and singled him out for myself. . . . I hankered for a sleeping-bag out on the snow, or for the blubbery atmosphere of Hut Point. I expect the truth of the matter was that all my special pals, Bill, Cherry, Titus, and Atch, had been left behind.

But the comforts of civilized life had no charms for him. The call of the wild, with its harsh allurements, was in his blood and once more he was off again.

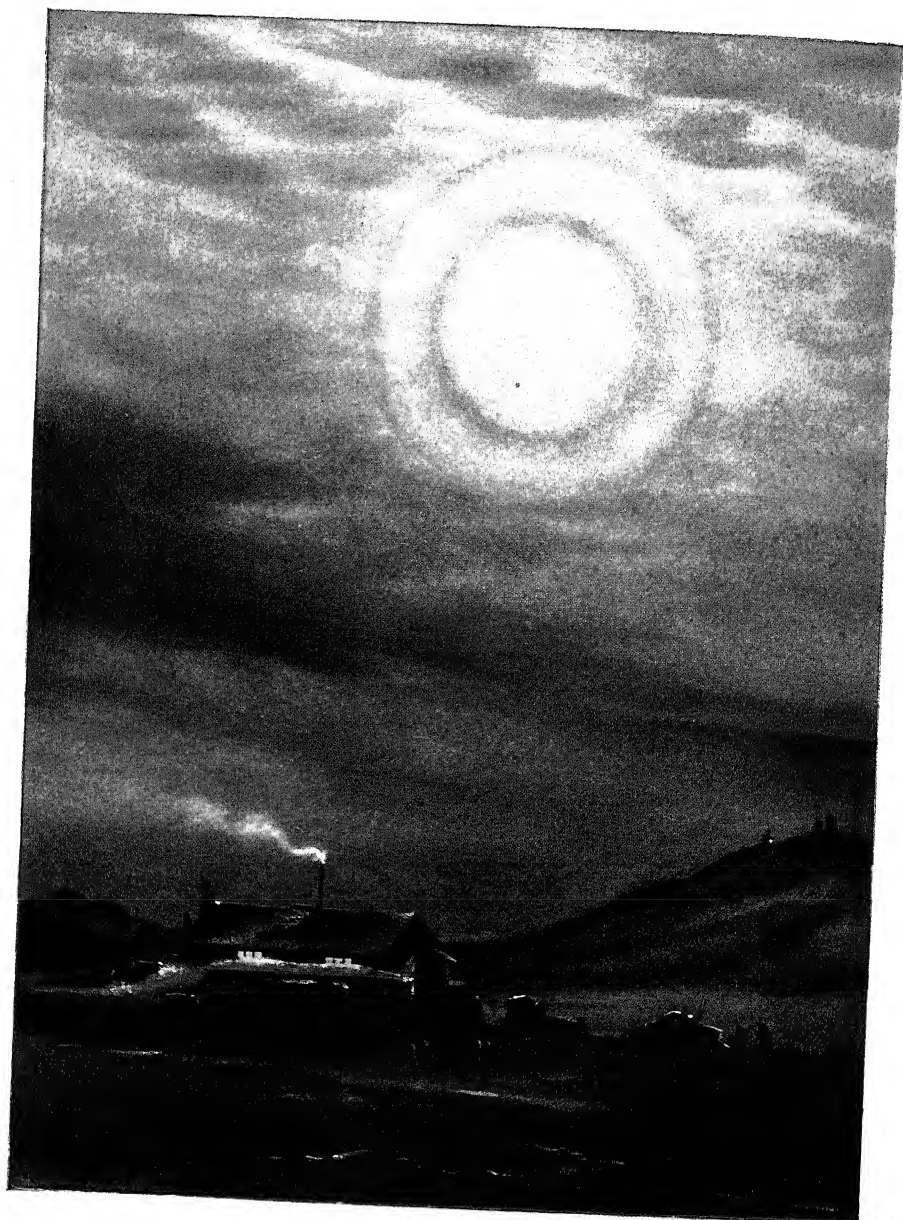
A party had to return to Hut Point with some provision in a day or two, so I asked to go. Captain Scott had decided to go himself, but said he would be very pleased if I would go too ; so it being a fine day we left the following Monday. The two teams consisted of Captain Scott, Lashly, Day and Dimitri with one tent and sledge, and Crean, Hooper, Nelson and myself with the other. We had it fine as far as the Glacier Tongue ; and then along came the cheery old south wind in our faces ; we crossed the Tongue and struggled against this till we could camp under the Hutton Cliffs where we got some shelter. All of us had our faces frost-bitten, the washing and shaving having made mine quite tender. It was a bit of a job

¹ Cherry-Garrard.

getting up the cliff ; we had to stand on top of a pile of fallen ice and hoist a 10-foot sledge on to our shoulders, at least on to the shoulders of the tall ones ; this just touched the overhanging cornice. A cornice of snow is caused by continual drift over a sharp edge ; it takes all sorts of fantastic shapes, but usually hangs over like this. Looking edgeways it looks as if it must fall down, but as a matter of fact is usually very tough indeed. In this case steps were cut in it with an ice axe from our extemporary ladder, and Captain Scott and I got up first. With the aid of a rope and the ladder we got the light ones up first, and hauled up the gear last of all ; hanging the sledge from the top with one rope enabled the last two to struggle up it assisted by a rope round them from above. It was a cold job and more frost-bites occurred in two of our novices, one on a foot and the other on a finger.

We faced the blast again, but got it partially behind us on reaching the Heights. We camped for the night under Castle Rock on an inclined slope. It calmed down to a glorious night with a low temperature. Crean and I lay head down hill to make Nelson and Hooper—who had never sledged before—more comfortable. As a result Crean slipped half out of the tent and let in a cold stream of air under the balance, for which I was at a loss to account until the morning disclosed him thus, fast asleep of course. It takes a lot to worry Captain Scott's coxswain.

We arrived at Hut Point and had a great reception there, chiefly on account of the food we brought, particularly the sugar. We had been living on some paraffin sugar when I left before, and even this was finished. The next day we stayed there to kill seals. Cherry and I skinned one and then went for a walk round Cape Armitage. It was blowing big guns off the cape, fairly fizzing in fact. We went as far as Pram Point and then turned, coming in with it behind us. I only had a thin balaclava and my ears were nearly nipped.



LUNAR CORONA

By kind permission of Mrs. Wilson

Dr. E. A. Wilson, del.

CHAPTER XIV

Winter Quarters

I do not think there can be any life quite so demonstrative of character as that which we had on these expeditions. One sees a remarkable reassortment of values. Under ordinary conditions it is so easy to carry a point with a little bounce ; self-assertion is a mask which covers many a weakness. As a rule we have neither the time nor the desire to look beneath it, and so it is that commonly we accept people on their own valuation. Here the outward show is nothing, it is the inward purpose that counts. So the ' Gods ' dwindle and the humble supplant them. Pretence is useless.

CAPTAIN SCOTT (5.5.1911).

A HUT of dimensions 50 by 25 feet, accommodating two dozen men for five months of outer darkness, is sufficiently economical of space to allow its occupants to get into close touch with one another in more senses than one. In such proximity, for so long a time, disguise and pretence are useless, and each man is able almost to read his fellow's soul. The fact that on this Expedition the winter passed not only without any friction at all, but in the greatest possible harmony, is perhaps the best tribute of all to the calibre of its members.

Midmost of one wall were ranged the upper bunks of Bowers, Oates and Meares, with those of Cherry-Garrard and Atkinson below, and a space for gear between. These allotments (as we learn from the

South Polar Times) were named the 'Tenements,' and the occupants the 'Bunderlogh,' from their alleged monkey-like preference for 'aerial burrows.' Opposite the 'Tenements' across the width of the Hut in similar arrangement lived the Scientists (or 'Ubdugs'),—Nelson, Debenham and Gran, with Day and Griffith-Taylor below, and Simpson and Wright to one side of them. Anything in the nature of ragging in the Hut being strictly disallowed, verbal warfare was incessant between the allotments. Oates, ably seconded by Bowers, was the champion of the one, while Griffith-Taylor was the formidable protagonist of the other, and it may be surmised that their respective weapons were in the nature of a bludgeon to a rapier. But Oates scored a great hit when he began his first lecture on Horse Management with, 'Gentlemen—and Scientists'—concluding it with the pessimistic remark that he had been fortunate enough to secure another evening.

Oates and Bowers would frequently, for lack of argument with their common foe, exchange badinage with each other. The topic between them would be most likely to turn on the respective merits of the horse and the ship as means of locomotion, or of the army and navy as instruments of war, or of Napoleon and Nelson as commanders. Oates was especially desirous of discovering some deficiency in Bowers' knowledge of seamanship, but it is not on record that he ever succeeded. Bowers (whose presence even in sleep could not be ignored, for his snores were the loudest) would wake with a terrific long-drawn yawn and 'Well, Farmer, how's the hay this morning?' A long pause, then a

crushing (and probably unprintable) reply from the Soldier. Honour satisfied, Bowers would then descend from his perch and join Wilson at the snow-filled wash-tub, where they would proceed to rub down 'glistening limbs with this chilling substance.'

A clever squib by Griffith-Taylor in the *South Polar Times*, unflatteringly descriptive of each species of the genera 'Bunderlogh' and 'Ubdug,' thus describes Bowers :

B. Avicula.¹ This stocky species of Bunderlogh, compact and incisive in manner—with an integument capable of resisting *Phraustbitis* ² to an incredible degree,—is, I feel sure, destined to illustrate the law of 'The Survival of the Fittest' in these inclement regions. Moreover in brilliancy of plumage he is pre-eminent, while another sign of his vigour is the depth of his evensong,³ which rivals a Wagnerian Grand Opera, and far exceeds the meagre piping of the other *Aphtagarda*.⁴

From the camp of his friends came another picture in the form of an Open Letter, by Atkinson.

SIR,

You were appointed to this Expedition in 1910, and joined it as 4th Mate, with charge of the stores. You performed your duties in London with great zeal, and in your anxiety to see where a split pea had been, fell down the main-hold. But being well endowed by a somewhat unkind Nature, you survived in a sitting position. We congratulate you and are happy to have you with us.

On the voyage to New Zealand you again served with great zeal and ability.

You kept the middle watch, and subdued your truculent dogs-of-war ⁵ with the greatest ease. The Truculent Farmer gave some trouble, but was unable to stump you in any question of seamanship.

¹ Little bird. ² Frost-bite. ³ SnORES. ⁴ Afterguard.

⁵ Officers who acted as midshipmen of the watch.

He was succeeded by two others of a different stamp ; these two ' dawgs ' were ' as lean and flat-bellied as they could possibly be.'¹ You had the longest run for your watch and were caricatured plenteously.

Your snoring capacities were phenomenal.

Sir ! Your ideas of heat and cold are peculiar, we are bound to confess. We are sure that in India you do not feel heat, and wear accordingly very thick and inappropriate clothes. Likewise in approaching the Antarctic you equally do not feel cold, and appear in a thin shirt and the Green Hat.

Your leanings towards Science are well marked. You have already mastered Archæology and cast that aside. Petrology suffered the same fate. Meteorology, ballooning and photo-protozoology are done with. You are now following in the footsteps of a great Master, and Evoluting is your subject.

Your motto is ' Avoid Scurvy,' and in this you play into the hands of the Chief, ' Reindeer Bill.'² When your two heads are together he is generally in a sitting posture.

You believe, Sir, above everything, in being a sailor.

We agree with you ; you can navigate most things, and that right well. But in future be careful of navigating ice-floes, especially with a crew composed of ' Cheery blaggards ' and quadrupeds.

We wish you, Sir, all good luck and success.

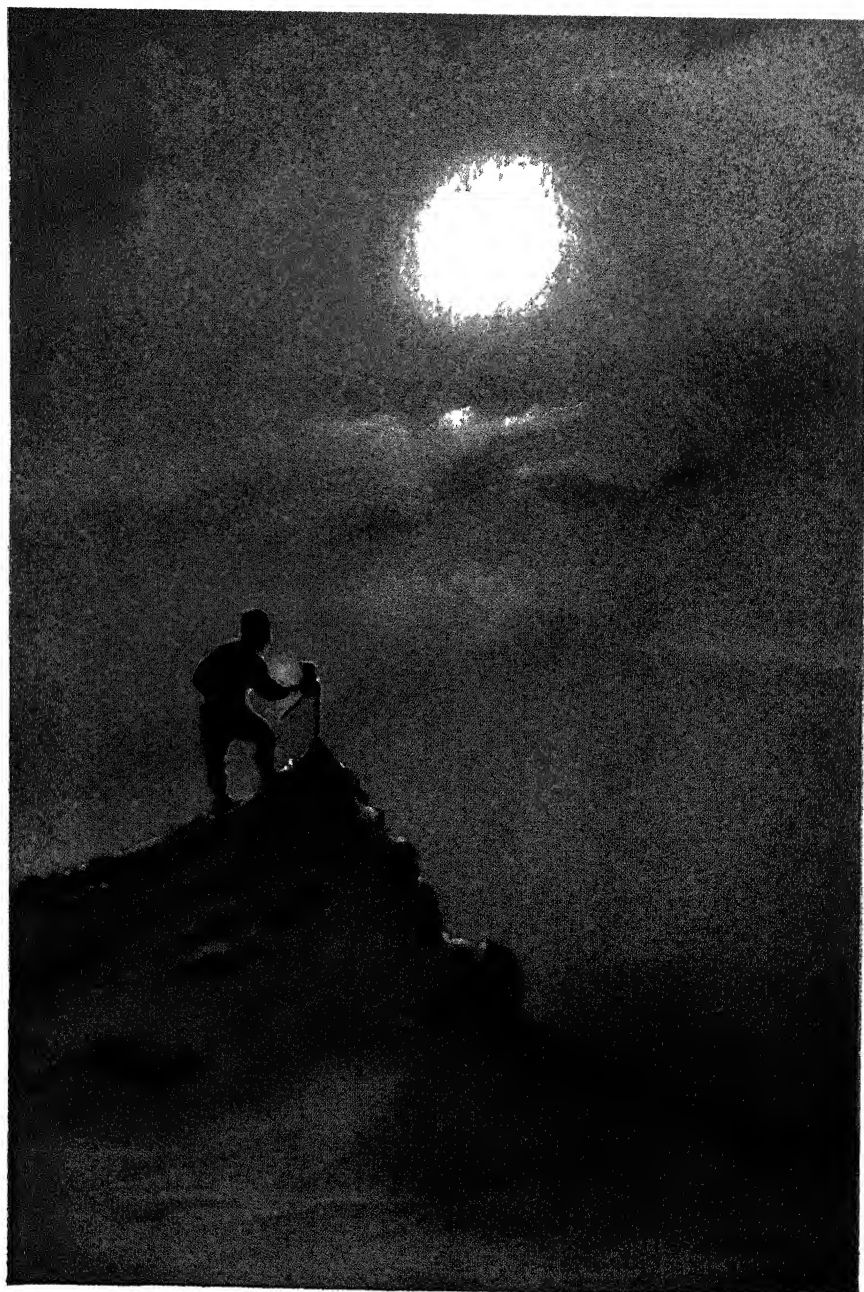
Scott has a word to say of Bowers' value to the Expedition during these winter months.

To Bowers' practical genius is owed much of the smooth working of our station. He has a natural method in line with which all arrangements fall. . . . Active mind and active body were never more happily blended. It is a restless activity, admitting no idle moments and ever budding into new forms.

So we see the balloon ascending under his guidance and anon he is away over the floe tracking the silk thread which held it. Such a task completed, he is away to exercise his pony, and later out again with the dogs, the last typically self-suggested, because for the moment there

¹ Wright and Day.

² Wilson.



BOWERS ON THE RAMP, JUNE 6TH, 1911
By kind permission of Mrs. Wilson.

Dr. E. A. Wilson, del.

is no one else to care for these animals. Now in a similar manner he is spreading thermometer screens to get comparative readings with the home station. He is for the open air, seemingly incapable of realizing any discomfort from it, and yet his hours within doors spent with equal profit. For he is intent on tracking the problems of sledging food and clothing to their innermost bearings and is becoming an authority on past records. This will be no small help to me and one which others never could have given. . . . Bowers' meteorological stations have been amusingly named Archibald, Bertram, Clarence—they are entered by the initial letter, but spoken of by full title.

The most inaccessible of these stations was on the Ramp, and thither he and Wilson would betake themselves every evening 'to read Bertram.' 'These screens,' he wrote, 'were a useful addition to our walks, and gave one an object to go out for, in fact the reading of them became quite a popular amusement.' This remark was true of 'Archibald' and 'Clarence,' but 'Bertram's' popularity was upheld consistently by these two men only. Here Wilson sketched Bowers reading the thermometer on June 6, and simultaneously Ponting took a flashlight photograph of the pair of them, and sketch and photograph compared together give a remarkable impression of the desolation of a polar night.

A diversion by which Scott sought to relieve the tedium of its passing was the institution of lectures. In them instruction was often mixed with entertainment: as happened in the case of Nelson's lecture on biology, at which Scott notes that 'Bowers caused much amusement by demanding to know "If the pycnogs (pycnogonids) were more nearly related to the arachnids (spiders) or crustaceans."'

As a matter of fact a very sensible question, but it caused amusement because of its sudden display of long names.'

Bowers' own two lectures were on subjects which he had taken much pains to study. In the discussion that followed the first of these, on sledging diets, 'feeling went deepest on the subject of tea versus cocoa,' when the lecturer's views would appear to have been questioned by Petty-Officer Evans, and also by Scott, who was inclined to favour the mildly stimulating effects of tea. His second lecture, on polar clothing, was given after his return from the Winter Journey: 'He had worked the subject up from our Polar library with critical and humorous ability, and since his recent journey he must be considered as entitled to an authoritative opinion of his own.'¹

When the sea-ice froze over he made two excursions to Cape Royds: the first with Scott, Wilson, Atkinson and two seamen, for the purpose of making an inventory of the stores left there by Shackleton; the second with Cherry-Garrard for a 'picnic.'

When the twilight of the long Antarctic dawn began to break at the end of August, he voluntarily assisted Simpson with his meteorological records.

During the early weeks when we had a certain amount of light I helped Sunny Jim. The idea was a light instrument which registers the height and temperature continuously on a small plate. This is released at a given time by slow match and the balloon goes off and the instrument drops on a small parachute. To this is attached a black silk thread which is in 5 mile lengths.

¹ Notes on this lecture were kept by Griffith-Taylor—*With Scott—The Silver Lining*, p. 300.



WILSON SKETCHING BOWERS ON RAMP, JUNE 7TH, 1911, -40° F.

H. G. Ponting, phot.

This lies along the snow and facilitates the recovery of the instrument.

Though he does not say so, he would sometimes walk as far as 10 miles to recover it. Sir George Simpson writes :

Bowers was of great help to me in the balloon work. The balloons were filled with hydrogen which was made from calcium hydride in exactly the same way as acetylene is made from calcium carbide. The balloons carried a small, light, self-recording instrument which recorded the pressure and the temperature, from which the temperature at each height could be calculated. To each balloon was attached the end of a black silk thread—the thread unwinding from a special reel containing a five mile length of thread. The instrument was detached from the balloon after a predetermined time by means of a burning slow match which burnt the string connecting the instrument to the balloon. Theoretically all that was required to find the balloon was to walk along the thread until it led to the balloon.

Bowers usually took over the work of preparing the hydrogen and filling the balloon while I got the instrument ready and attached it, thus saving a great deal of time and making it possible to use the infrequent intervals of calm ; as it was impossible to make balloon ascents when there was any wind. After an ascent Bowers and I would set off across the sea-ice along the thread to try to find the instrument ; but we had many disappointments, the thread often leading across leads in the ice where we could not follow ; but even more frequently we found the thread broken and the instrument could not be found.

One day I had just released a balloon when I exclaimed to Bowers, 'Damn it all, I have forgotten again to take the number of the instrument.' Bowers replied it was No. 23. I was surprised for I did not know that he knew there was a number stamped on each instrument. When I expressed my surprise I added, 'I suppose you did not notice the number of the instrument which we sent up last week.' 'Yes,' he replied, 'that was No. 15. . . .' I don't think I have ever met a man other than a scholar

who had such a good memory. I can only add my testimony to the splendid character of the man. Indefatigable, helpful, unselfish, cheerful and humorous and above all dependable. What more can one expect of a man? It is no wonder that he was with Wilson the favourite of the whole Expedition.

But more strenuous than that was the exercise he gave himself with the ponies.

I used to ride my horse 'Victor,' but he is a lively beggar as well as a big brute to manage bareback. All the ponies when they can get away streak straight for the stable and as they are generally on the look-out to bolt you have to hang on them like grim death. I gave up riding Master Victor when he got away with me on his back one day and fairly legged it for home. I had no bit or stirrups, only a piece of rope in his mouth which he did not mind a bit. I stuck on till we reached the first tide-crack and then fearing that he would charge through the stable door with me on, I dropped off as gracefully as possible.¹

Between whiles he was making preparations for the Winter Journey to Cape Crozier with Wilson and Cherry-Garrard. The latter was practising building a stone and snow hut as a model of one to be built upon the slopes of Mount Terror. Bowers was bent upon the construction of an original balaclava helmet with numerous buttons and flaps, which were to be arranged according to the wind.

¹ Cherry-Garrard writes : ' Being the smallest man in the party he schemed to have allotted to him the largest pony available both for the Depôt and Polar Journeys. Their exercise, when he succeeded, was a matter for experiment, for his knowledge of horses was as limited as his love of animals was intense. He started to exercise his second pony (for the first was lost on the floe) by riding him. " I'll soon get used to him," he said one day when Victor had just deposited him in the tide-crack, " to say nothing of his getting used to me," he added in a more subdued voice.'

It was known to his companions as 'the picture hat.'

'What do you think of *that* for a hat, sir?' I heard him say to Scott a few days before we started, holding it out much as Lucille displays her latest Paris model. Scott looked at it quietly for a time: 'I'll tell you when you come back, Birdie,' he said. It was a complicated affair with all kinds of nose-guards and buttons and lanyards; he thought he was going to set it to suit the wind much as he would set the sails of a ship.¹

With all his other varied activities Bowers continued to carry out his duties as store-keeper with his accustomed conscientiousness and zeal. Scott, after observing with pleasure the jealous guardianship of others who were in charge of minor stores, whose policy was 'to have something up their sleeves for a rainy day,' continues, 'our main store-keeper Bowers even affects to bemoan imaginary shortages. Such parsimony is the best guarantee that we are prepared to face any serious call.' Quite a number of secret caches existed, he remarked, hidden from general knowledge so that they might escape use till a real necessity arose.

It was not a serious call or a real necessity, but it was surely a notable occasion which produced the bill of fare for Midwinter's Night, June 22, 1911.

Extracts from Scott's description of the banquet are worth quoting here, especially as the climax of its celebration was provided by Bowers.

In preparation for the evening our 'Union Jacks' and sledge flags were hung about the large table, which itself was laid with glass and a plentiful supply of champagne bottles instead of the customary mugs and enamel lime-

¹ Cherry-Garrard.

juice jugs. At seven o'clock we sat down to an extravagant bill of fare as compared with our usual simple diet.

Beginning on seal soup, by common consent the best decoction that our cook produces, we went on to roast beef with Yorkshire pudding, fried potatoes and Brussels-sprouts. Then followed a flaming plum pudding and excellent mince-pies, and thereafter a dainty savoury of anchovy and cods' roe. A wondrous attractive meal even in so far as judged by our simple lights, but with its garnishments a positive feast, for withal the table was strewn with dishes of burnt almonds, crystallized fruits, chocolates and such toothsome kickshaws, whilst the unstinted supply of champagne which accompanied the courses was succeeded by a noble array of liqueur bottles from which choice could be made in the drinking of toasts. . . . By the end of dinner a very cheerful spirit prevailed, and the room was cleared for Ponting and his lantern, whilst the gramophone gave forth its most lively airs. . . .

After this show the table was restored for snapdragon, and a brew of milk punch was prepared in which we drank to the health of Campbell's Party and of our good friends in the *Terra Nova*. Then the table was again removed and a set of lancers formed.

By this time the effect of stimulating liquid refreshment on men so long accustomed to a simple life became apparent. . . . In the midst of the revelry Bowers suddenly appeared, followed by some satellites bearing an enormous Christmas Tree whose branches bore flaming candles, gaudy crackers, and little presents for all. The presents, I learnt, had been prepared with kindly thought by Miss Souper (Mrs. Wilson's sister) and the tree had been made by Bowers of pieces of stick and string with coloured paper to clothe its branches; the whole erection was remarkably creditable and the distribution of the presents caused much amusement.

'Birdie's distribution was magnificent,' wrote one recipient, to whose lot fell a miniature 'Physiographic outfit' and a packet of shaving paper—this was 'for our Griff'; Debenham became the

proud possessor of a necklace, Nelson of a fan, while Oates, who received a popgun, was so pleased with it that he went round requesting to be allowed to shoot everybody.

The very heavens provided a magnificent spectacle of waving banners as if in benediction that night. It was 'the most vivid and beautiful display' that Scott had ever seen, and he did justice to it in a word-picture of great power. It must have seemed to the little company of explorers that the elements promised to be auspicious to their enterprise, now that the year had turned and the long summer solstice was at last begun.

On August 26 the sun reappeared at noon above the horizon.

The contributions to the *South Polar Times* were not only humorous ; and some verses of Bowers—which, to judge from their place in the volume, he would appear to have written at this time—must have well reflected the more serious feelings of all. Their metre is borrowed from a well-known hymn, but they are infused with that triumphant spirit which was all his own.

Thou whose far-reaching ray heralds the dawn of day,
At last begun,
Scatt'ring with glorious light darkness of winter night,
Dazzling in brilliance bright,
Hail mighty Sun !

Greatest of Heaven's lights, grandest of earthly sights,—
Cape, island, shore,
Limitless plains of snow, peak, boulder, berg and floe,
Lit with thy radiant glow,
Greet thee once more.

CHAPTER XV

The Winter Journey

Bowers has come through best, all things considered, and I believe he is the hardest traveller that ever undertook a Polar journey, as well as one of the most undaunted ; more by hint than direct statement I gather his value to the party, his untiring energy and the astonishing physique which enables him to continue to work under conditions which are absolutely paralysing to others. Never was such a sturdy, active, undefeatable little man.

CAPTAIN SCOTT (2.8.1911).

BOWERS wrote three letters home from Winter Quarters. The first contains a full account of all the activities in which he played no small part from the landing to the Dépôt Journey, including the harrowing incident on the floe ; the second continues the story, in outline, from the return to Cape Evans to the start of the 'Spring' Journey, and this includes the Winter Journey ; the third gives a brief account of the Spring Journey and concludes with the final preparations for the Pole. The two last were evidently written at great speed as though the writer were pressed for time. The second letter is of 12 pages and only 6½ of these deal with the Winter Journey. It begins—

I have already written a book about my doings as far as our return to Cape Evans ; following that I have

started another volume which I may not have time to complete before the ship sails. It contains chiefly our small doings in the winter and other trifles as well as an account of the Cape Crozier journey. . . . Never have I known time fly like it has here—there has never been a spare moment for anything. . . .

and it ends with an apology phrased in much the same way as his letters from the Gulf had often been,

Well, I have said a lot about myself, but I am longing to hear about you. . . . I seem to have lost my cunning at letter-writing after this long lapse, but I hope it will be of interest.

‘I hope it will be of interest!’—The Winter Journey!

The Winter Journey to Cape Crozier and back was a feat of endurance and courage that has never been surpassed in the annals of Polar exploration, north or south. Yet in reading Bowers’ brief account of it, though the stark facts are there, one might suppose (from its conclusion) this particular adventure to have been nothing so very much out of the way, or at any rate to be numbered among experiences which, as his friend Atkinson would say, can be regarded as ‘cast aside’ and ‘done with.’

No doubt one reason for this must have been his desire to spare his home-folk anxiety, and another the fact that he was already too much engrossed with present events and future plans to dwell much on the past. There was never anything retrospective in his attitude to life; it was glad enthusiasm for the present moment and eager expectancy all the time.

‘It was vital to his nature,’ says his sister, ‘always to be doing something and planning something else, very often at the same time.’

His brief account of the Winter Journey has therefore no details to add to those which Wilson's official Report,¹ severely reticent as it is, gives much more fully. The value of Wilson's Report is scientific, especially in reference to the glaciation of the area they traversed ; it is valuable also as an unconscious revelation of the character of its writer. The interest of Bowers' account is by comparison not so much in the matter of what he has to tell as in his characteristic manner of telling it. Were it not for Cherry-Garrard's realistic description not only of the circumstances and conditions of the journey but also of the travellers' reaction to them, we could but dimly visualize what really happened ; and his record has a further value : it is literature.

The following disconnected extracts from Bowers' letter are chosen because they are the only graphic touches it contains, and they also mark the salient features of the journey.

June 30. We had to relay. As time went on we found we could scarcely drag one sledge along, as the intensely cold snow clung like powder to the runners. We dropped to about 2 miles a day for 8 or 9 hours' work, which was so strenuous that at times a drink of lime-juice would have been delightful at — 60°. . . .

Cherry blistered all his fingers and some of his toes with frostbite, and Bill one or two toes. I was fortunate as my feet did me proud, and was also able to sleep better than either of them.

July 3. We had auroras the like of which I have never imagined. At times the sky was ablaze with brilliant curtains of light being shaken along as if by a breeze and whirling into vortices or opening like a vast mushroom overhead, at other times shafts like searchlight beams. We lay flat on our backs and looked up at them.

¹ *Scott's Last Expedition*, Vol. II.

July 6. One day at lunch it was -77° when we started marching.¹ We had been out nearly a fortnight then and I was beginning to think I could stand most things, but then I did not want to ask for any more.

To get into one's bag was an effort that required skill, care, and time. Once you were thawed out everything became sopping until you were soft all over and comfortably wet and warm. . . .

July 10-12. We were hung up 3 days with blizzards and the temperature rose to zero. It seemed oppressively warm after what we had had. We got wetter than ever in this heat and the bags were now so saturated that Bill's began to split and we had to knock off rolling them up for fear of breaking them, and laid them on the sledge like 3 squashed coffins.

July 17-19. It took us 3 days to dig out the frozen rocks for the walls of our igloo. This was then roofed with canvas which we had brought and banked round with stones and ice and snow.²

July 20. [Returning to the igloo from the Rookery.] I fell into the tide-crack and wet my feet which froze stiff at once (that is the finneskoe, etc.)—I was all right though.

July 22-23. [During exposure to the 48 hours' blizzard.] I jumped out and held on to the canvas roof for a few moments before crack—and the whole business flew to ribbons and I dived for my bag. I was resolved to keep warm and paddled my feet about and sang all the songs and hymns I knew to pass the time. I could occasionally thump Bill and as he still moved I knew he was alive all right. What a birthday for him! We had been 48

¹ By the reading of the thermometer which he swung. When this instrument was corrected, it showed the actual temperature to have been -76° .

² 'Birdie gathered rocks from over the hill, nothing was too big or him; Bill did the banking up outside while I built the wall with the boulders. . . . Birdie was very disappointed that we could not finish the whole thing that day, but there was a lot to do yet and we were tired out. We turned out early the next morning to try and finish the igloo, but it was blowing too hard. . . .'—CH.-G.

hours without a meal when the wind took off and I rushed down the slope to try and find our precious tent. It was too dark to see anything however. . . . Later we went forth again and I found the tent about half a mile down the ridge and thanked God for His mercy as we were in a pretty hole in any case.

July 25. All that night the tent flapped like the noise of musketry, owing to two poles having been broken at the ends and the fit spoilt. I thought it would end matters by going altogether and lashed it down as much as I could, attaching the apex to a line round my own bag.¹

July 27. [Among pressure ridges and crevasses on the return journey.] My balaclava helmet was so frozen up that my head was incased in a solid block of ice and I could not look down without inclining my whole body. As a result . . . I stumbled into a crevasse. Bill said 'What do you want?' I asked for an alpine rope with a bow line for my foot, and taking up first the bowline and then my harness they got me out.² From then on we had fine weather which was a godsend ; our rapidly dwindling oil and the temp. below — 60° on the Barrier together with the lack of sleep my companions were suffering from were all factors which made our rapid return most desirable.

Aug. 2. [Return to the Hut.] The sudden warmth of the Hut affected all our feet and for over a week we walked about like cats on hot bricks, the only relief being to make one's feet cold when the pain went off. Everything soon settled down however, and hearing the Owner intended to go West in the Spring I started nosing round and had the satisfaction of being included in the party.

Those are the sentences that give the gist of what he had to say ; what he does not say, however, may be gathered from Wilson's Official Report :

¹ He called this, nautically, the tent 'down-haul.'

² 'Afterwards we often used this way of getting people out of crevasses, and it was a wonderful piece of presence of mind that it was invented, so far as I know, on the spur of the moment by a frozen man hanging in one himself.'—CH.-G.

All the temperatures and weather notes in this Report are taken directly from Bowers' record.¹ Bowers also made himself responsible for the sledge meter records, and for notes on the condition of the ice on Ross Sea when we were at Cape Crozier. He also kept full notes of the auroras, and did so much generally throughout the journey and with so much persistence notwithstanding the difficulties that beset us, that this Report must be considered as much his as mine. He has moreover read it all through and has materially helped me in making it complete. What I think of him and of Cherry-Garrard as companions for a sledge journey of this kind I have already made known to you, sir, in conversation. It would be impossible to say too much about either of them. I think their patience and persistence from beginning to end was what made five weeks of discomfort not only bearable but much more than pleasant.²

Sir George Simpson also writes :

Bowers' meteorological log on the Cape Crozier journey is a masterpiece. Throughout the journey which lasted for 36 days in the depth of winter ; when for days at a time the temperature was below — 50°F., frequently below — 60°F., and on one day — 76° F. ; when every observation had to be taken and recorded by candlelight, the meteorological log is practically complete with three observations a day. Only during the two days when their tent had blown

¹ Bowers does not appear to have thought it worth while to mention the fact that he took any records at all. His complete and accurate Meteorological Log of this journey is given as the Appendix to Vol. II of *Scott's Last Expedition*.

² At the end of Wilson's manuscript of the Report are the following notes in Bowers' writing :

' p. 17. N.B. Illustration very pretty.

p. 18. Lower illustration very pretty, but roof-cloth was green in colour and sledge looks rather like a *boot-jack*.

Note.—All stones which might chafe the roof-cloth were removed or padded at the upper contact edge.

At Destination Camp temperature cracks were often heard in the surroundings in and beneath the tent—the sounds resembled the striking of an iron tank with metal.'

away and they were practically without shelter in a wind of storm force (10 and 11 on the Beaufort Scale) did the observations fall to one a day. On this journey the lowest temperature recorded on the Expedition was experienced. It occurred at noon on July 6th 1911 on the Barrier south of Mt. Erebus the temperature being, 12 hrs. — 75.8° F.; 17 hrs. 15 min. — 76° F.; it was typical of Bowers' thoroughness that he entered in the remarks column: '*Note*—the temperatures at 12 hrs. and 17 hrs. 15 min. were carefully checked by Dr. Wilson.'

The following are some extracts from Cherry-Garrard's graphic account :

It was the darkness that did it. I don't believe minus seventy temperatures would be bad in daylight, not comparatively bad, when you could see where you were going, where you were stepping, where the sledge straps were, the cooker, the primus, the food ; could see your footsteps lately trodden deep into the soft snow that you might find your way back to the rest of your load ; could see the lashings of the food bags ; could read a compass without striking three or four different boxes to find one dry match ; could read your watch to see if the blissful moment of getting out of your bag was come without groping in the snow all about ; when it would not take you five minutes to lash up the door of the tent, and five hours to get started in the morning.

But in these days we were never less than four hours from the moment when Bill cried ' Time to get up ' to the time when we got into our harness. It took two men to get one man into his harness, and was all they could do, for the canvas was frozen and our clothes were frozen until sometimes not even two men could bend them into the required shape.

The trouble is sweat and breath. I never knew before how much of the body's waste comes out through the pores of the skin. On the most bitter days, when we had to camp before we had done a four-hour march in order to nurse back our frozen feet, it seemed that we must be sweating. And all this sweat, instead of passing away through the porous wool of our clothing and gradually drying off us, froze and accumulated. It passed just

away from our flesh and then became ice ; we shook plenty of snow and ice down from inside our trousers every time we changed our foot-gear, and we could have shaken it from our vests and from between our vests and shirts, but of course we could not strip to this extent. But when we got into our sleeping-bags, if we were fortunate, we became warm enough during the night to thaw this ice ; part remained in our clothes, part passed into the skins of our sleeping-bags, and soon both were sheets of armour-plate.

As for our breath—in the daytime it did nothing worse than cover the lower parts of our faces with ice and solder our balaclavas tightly to our heads. It was no good trying to get your balaclava off until you had had the primus going quite a long time, and then you could throw your breath about if you wished. The trouble really began in your sleeping-bag, for it was far too cold to keep a hole open through which to breathe. So all night long our breath froze into the skins, and our respiration became quicker and quicker as the air in our bags got fouler and fouler ; it was never possible to make a match strike or burn inside our bags ! . . .

Our sleeping-bags were getting really bad by now, and already it took a long time to thaw a way down into them at night. Bill spread his in the middle, Bowers was on his right, and I was on his left. Always he insisted that I should start getting my legs into mine before *he* started ; we were rapidly cooling down after our hot supper, and this was very unselfish of him. Then came seven shivering hours and first thing on getting out of our sleeping-bags in the morning we stuffed our personal gear into the mouth of the bag before it could freeze ; this made a plug which when removed formed a frozen hole for us to push into as a start in the evening.

We got into some strange knots when trying to persuade our limbs into our bags, and suffered terribly from cramp in consequence. We would wait and rub, but directly we tried to move again down it would come and grip our legs in a vice. We also, especially Bowers, suffered agony from cramp in the stomach. We let the primus burn on after supper now for a time—it was the only thing which kept us going—and when one who was hold-

ing the primus was seized with cramp we hastily took the lamp from him until the spasm was over. It was horrible to see Birdie's stomach cramp sometimes; he certainly got it much worse than Bill or I. . . .

Birdie always lit the candle in the morning—so called, and this was an heroic business. Moisture collected on our matches if you looked at them. Partly I suppose it was bringing them from outside into a comparatively warm tent; partly from putting boxes into pockets in our clothing. Sometimes it was necessary to try four or five boxes before a match struck. . . .

How Bowers managed with the meteorological instruments I do not know, but the meteorological log is perfectly kept. Yet as soon as you breathed near the paper it was covered with a film of ice through which the pencil would not bite. To handle rope was always cold and in these very low temperatures dreadfully cold work. . . .

We began to realize, now that our eyes were more or less out of action, how much we could do with our feet and ears. The effect of walking in finnesko is much the same as walking in gloves, and you get a sense of touch which nothing else except bare feet could give you. Thus we could feel every small variation in surface, every crust through which our feet broke, every hardened patch below the soft snow. And soon we began to rely more and more upon the sound of our footsteps to tell us whether we were on crevasses or solid ground. . . .

From first to last during this journey we had plenty of variety and none of that monotony which is inevitable in sledging over long distances of Barrier in summer. Only the long shivering fits following close one after the other all the time we lay in our dreadful sleeping-bags, hour after hour and night after night in those temperatures—they were as monotonous as could be. Later we got frost-bitten even as we lay in our sleeping-bags. Things are getting pretty bad when you get frost-bitten in your bag. . . .

For days Birdie had been urging me to use his eider-down lining—his beautiful dry bag of the finest down—which he had never slipped into his own fur bag. I had refused; I felt that I should be a beast to take it. . . .

I was feeling as if I should crack, and accepted Birdie's eiderdown. It was wonderfully self-sacrificing of him ; more than I can write. I felt a brute to take it, but I was getting useless unless I got some sleep which my big bag would not allow. Bill and Birdie kept on telling me to do less ; that I was doing more than my share of the work ; but I think that I was getting more and more weak. Birdie kept wonderfully strong ; he slept most of the night ; the difficulty for him was to get into his bag without going to sleep. He kept the meteorological log untiringly, but some of these nights he had to give it up for the time because he could not keep awake. He used to fall asleep with his pannikin in his hand and let it fall ; and sometimes he had the primus. . . .

The day's march was bliss compared to the night's rest, and both were awful. We were about as bad as men can be and do good travelling, but I never heard a word of complaint, nor, I believe, an oath, and I saw self-sacrifice standing every test. . . .

I do not believe that any man, however sick he is, has a much worse time than we had in those bags, shaking with cold until our backs would almost break. . . .

Antarctic exploration is seldom as bad as you imagine, seldom as bad as it sounds. But this journey had beggared our language ; no words could express its horror.

One of the objects of this journey—and it was self-imposed—was to experiment with sledging rations, for future guidance. The weight of food was 32 oz. per man per day. After a fortnight the proportion was revised to some extent, and so continued throughout the journey, as the following table shows.

	<i>Pemmican.</i>	<i>Biscuit.</i>	<i>Butter.</i>
Wilson . . .	12	16 [incr. from 12]	4 [red. from 8] only $\frac{1}{2}$ eaten.
Cherry-Garrard	12	16 [red. from 20]	4 [incr. from 0.] only $\frac{1}{2}$ eaten.
Bowers . . .	16	16	None.
	[4 uneaten]		

Tea was also taken for use at breakfast and lunch. 'We have none of us missed sugar or cocoa, or any of the other foods we have been used to on sledge journeys,' is Wilson's comment, 'and we have all found we were amply satisfied on this diet. Cocoa would have been pleasanter at night than plain hot water, but the hot water with biscuit soaked in it was very good.'

The sleeping-bags were of reindeer and eider-down, but Bowers (as shown above) did not use his eiderdown: 'and in some miraculous manner he managed to turn his reindeer bag (inside out) several times during the journey.' The weight of the bags at the start was 52 as against 118 lbs. at the conclusion of the journey. The corresponding weight of the tent was 35 as against 60 lbs. This gives some idea of the iced-up state of the travellers' equipment, to say nothing of their clothing.

The Winter Journey was accorded due honours in the *South Polar Times*, of which periodical—the 'Punch' of the Antarctic—Cherry-Garrard was both editor and typist. The chief feature was Bowers' burlesque, 'This is the house that Cherry built,' which Wilson appropriately illustrated.

1. THIS is the House that Cherry built.
2. THIS is the Ridge that topped the Moraine
That supported the House that Cherry built.
3. THESE are the Rocks and Boulders 'Erratic'—
Composing the Walls—with lavas 'Basic'—
That stood on the Ridge that topped the Moraine etc.
4. THIS is the Sledge and Canvas strong
That formed a roof about ten feet long,
To cover the Rocks and Boulders 'Erratic,'
Composing the Walls—with lavas 'Basic'—etc.

5. THESE are the Ice-blocks hard and stout
That were placed so carefully round about,
To secure the Sledge and Canvas strong
That formed a Roof about ten feet long etc.
6. THIS is the bracing South Wind cool
That blew all day, (and the next as a rule),
And cemented the Ice-blocks hard and stout
That were placed so carefully round about etc.
7. THIS is the Blizzard of local fame,
Compared with which was considered tame
The best of the bracing South Winds cool
That blew all day (and the next as a rule) etc.
8. THESE are the Hours—five dozen or so—
Wherein unabated continued to blow
The good old Blizzard of local fame
Compared with which was considered tame etc.
9. THESE are the Fragments of canvas green
That round Cape Crozier can still be seen
On account of the Hours—five dozen or so—
Wherein unabated continued to blow etc.
10. THIS is the Debris of Stones and Sledge,
(And Tent half a mile down the Ridge's edge),
With parts of the cooker, and gloves and socks,
A muddle of sleeping-bags, men and rocks,
Primuses, oil-cans, penguin skins,
Eggs and pemmican, biscuit tins,
The box scientific, (Bill's treasure trove),
And all that remained of the Blubber Stove
Which collapsed like the Tent and the Igloo lone
And ended for ever 'The Age of stone,'
On Uncle's birthday,—an effort absurd,
With Cherry the Builder and Featherless Bird,
To get to a Rookery shielded by
Barrier Ridges of Pressure high
And rob without aid of the light of day
The eggs that the wingless Emperors lay
Where the sea-ice touches the rock cliffs bold
Neath the slopes of Mount Terror's crater cold,
Where scattered are fragments of Canvas green,
That round Cape Crozier can still be seen,

On account of the Hours—five dozen or so—
Wherein unabated continued to blow
The good old Blizzard of local fame,
Compared with which was considered tame
The best of the bracing South Winds cool
That blew all day, (and the next as a rule),
And cemented the Ice-blocks, hard and stout,
That were placed so carefully round about,
But failed to secure the Canvas strong
That formed a roof about ten feet long,
To cover the Rocks and Boulders ‘Erratic,’
Composing the Walls,—with lavas ‘Basic’—
That stood on the Ridge, that topped the Moraine,
And, somewhat collapsed, are all that remain
With some fragments of Bamboo Poles dejected,
Of the House of Stone that Cherry erected.

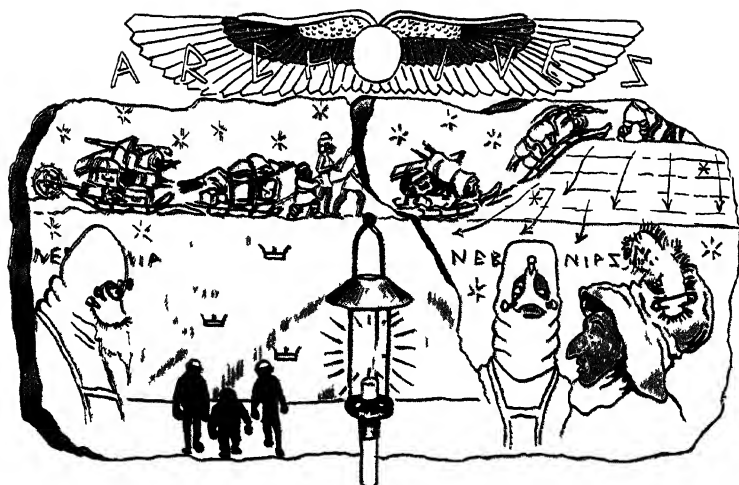
But another contribution, illustrated with Wilson’s Egyptian hieroglyphs, must be shown here. Mr. Cherry-Garrard has kindly provided the key to their solution, as follows :

These archives were written by Atkinson and illustrated by Wilson after we got in from the Winter Journey. Meteorologically speaking the asterisks mean snow, the crowns aurora. The smallest figure, in height at any rate, is Bowers. It is dark and sometimes the stars are shining.

You can see on the first fragment of stone our heavy weights on two sledges : the cold air flowing down the Barrier edge when we pulled them up it : the three of us going back for the second sledge when relaying on the Barrier by the light of a candle in a candlestick made by Day : our various nose nips according to taste : it is before the moon.

On the second stone the moon is growing. We got into our tent : the blizzard is outside and the cook inside, you can see the steam from the cooker coming from the ventilator : we revise our rations with which we were asked to experiment (as a doctor this has appealed to Atkinson). Bowers is all right, which is usual with him. Bill wants less fat and I want less biscuit (I appear with

THE SOUTH POLAR TIMES



1. Beför-themōntha-stahted
2. Tu-slayges and-aeve-wait.
3. Tha-goto-thebariah, thekoldair streamedophit.
4. Th'en itwaskold, minhaussephen-te-cephen.
5. Brushinthe tent-was-gūd, dounblow-itwasice.
6. Opher sandeplaces tharelayed by Dayaze-lamp.
7. Th'orarahswersplen-did, orangeyeloangrēn.
8. Nōsnips spared thenebs.
9. Birdebowahs-hadhāf pemhafbiskit,
10. Cherisāād pem anplentibiskit.
11. Unclehad xtraphat pemanbuttah.
12. Thentha-had strong-blizahds anditwas'ot.
13. Thakāmto thriges ophpresshah,
14. Theice splitand itwaskrevassed.

THE SOUTH POLAR TIMES



15. For teendaysout Unclesāadh
lesphat. Cherisāadh lesbiskit
16. Birdesāadh Imalright isnthis-
splendidh.
17. Tha-arriveh-dat th'Knoll and
built-a-stoneut.
18. Thagot-fyve-aigs.
19. Th'Emprahs ha-dtositonici-nst-
ead.
20. Th'wynd-bluawā-utandt tent anall.
21. Thebaghs werorful.

22. Tha-werg-lad tog-et-bakh, th'oil was dun.
23. The-morah-lis birdsnestin-gis tū-hūps inwintah.
24. Mah-wurdthadideat.



spectacles although actually I could not wear them owing to my breath freezing on them). Then we build our hut at Cape Crozier and Bowers is carrying an enormous rock.

We found the Emperors who could not get an egg to nurse holding lumps of ice into themselves instead, although they rejected the ice if offered a real egg. The left half of the third fragment shows Bowers jumping down on to the sea-ice upon which the Emperors breed : Wilson is about to follow him ; he laced his wind-proof trousers up his legs. The tide-crack is shown and the Emperors are looking at the eggs we took of which three survived our journey back to the Knoll through the pressure. True-egg was the form of preserved egg which we had at Winter Quarters. The moon is going away.

Then the wind blows away our hut and tent and all. It is quite dark. Then we pull Bowers out of the crevasse, which is very Egyptian : actually we could not pull him up and he invented a way of getting out which we used many times afterwards ; and you see us legging it home with the tent which we had found on top of the three sleeping-bags which we could not roll up because of all the ice inside.

The moral is birds-nesting is 'two hoops' in winter : anything extreme was two-hoops, I don't know why !

CHAPTER XVI

The Spring Journey

I cannot rest from travel : I will drink
Life to the lees : all times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone ; on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vext the dim sea. . . .
I am a part of all that I have met ;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.

TENNYSON (*Ulysses*).

ON September 15 Scott set forth for the Western Mountains on what he called 'a remarkably pleasant and instructive little spring journey,' and what Bowers called 'a jolly picnic.' Its object, in the main, was to prepare the way for the Geological Party's forthcoming journey. How Bowers contrived to get himself invited to this picnic between two such outings as the Winter Journey and the Polar Journey was a mystery to his companions, but that he had 'nosed round' to good purpose there was no doubt. The other members of the party were Simpson and P.O. Evans.

The entrance to the Ferrar Glacier (named after the geologist of the *Discovery* Expedition) lies due

west across the McMurdo Sound opposite Cape Evans, a distance of 35 miles. In summer it is open water and liable to much disturbance. It was the tremendous swell here which had broken up the sea-ice during the Dépôt Journey and caused the 'Bowers Incident' on the floe, besides breaking off the snout of Glacier Tongue to a length of two miles. The end of the Tongue had been chosen as a useful dépôt for provisions: a large supply of fodder had been left there from the ship just before it sailed north. 'At one time,' says Scott, 'it was suggested that the hut should be placed on this Tongue. What an adventurous voyage the occupants would have had!'

We headed for Butter Point where a dépôt of cases had been left by the ship for the Western Geological Party. We took about another 300 lbs. of stuff across to add to this dépôt for them, and a fortnight's food for ourselves. The strait is clean swept and frozen right out into the Ross Sea at this time of year, so we never saw any open water. It seemed so strange to be marching over a plain that I could so well remember as an immense firth of turbulent water as broad as the mouth of the Firth of Clyde. I shall never enjoy sea-ice much after my autumn experience, but felt no apprehension this time with about 4 to 8 feet thickness. We arrived at Butter Point on the third morning, depôté our stuff, and started up the Ferrar Glacier which is an immense arm or valley running into the sea between two straight walls of hills. It is many miles along before you come to the Glacier itself and then you mount on very old and broken up sea-ice. We camped up under the ice pressure-ridges at the foot of the Glacier, and started up the next day getting up a considerable height and along about 12 miles before we camped abreast of a huge hill which simply towered over us. The sun was still pretty low in the north and we lost our sunlight after lunch. We then made our way across and up the Glacier to the Cathedral Rocks which

are a wonderful group on the south side and from below resemble the buttresses of a Cathedral. Here we formed a permanent camp for a couple of days while we did a certain amount of glacier surveying, also remeasuring with Theodolite some stakes placed there by the Western Party last summer. By this means we found the glacier movement to have been nearly 32 feet in one place. It was a nippy job working a Theodolite up there. Captain Scott and I took many photographs—we had great rivalry over it and on the whole were both pretty successful on our return when they were developed.¹

I stuck my foot into a couple of crevasses but fortunately did not go down, and after going up a considerable distance for observations we turned down with a number of rock specimens and the next day did over 20 miles downhill. Our next objective was the coast to the north—it was not interesting—we went round the capes and dipped into the various bays—found magnificent valleys and new mountains and had splendid weather for the Spring. In fact we could not help comparing our happy condition with those at Cape Evans where you could see the blizzards sweeping round the slopes of Erebus from the Barrier.

Thus far Bowers. But Scott has more to say :

Bowers insists on doing all camp work ; he is a positive wonder. I never met such a sledge traveller.

We reached Cathedral Rocks on the 19th. Here we found the stakes placed by Wright across the glacier, and spent the remainder of the day and the whole of the 20th in plotting their position accurately. (Very cold wind down glacier increasing. In spite of this Bowers wrestled with theodolite. He is really wonderful. I have never seen anyone who could go on so long with bare fingers.

¹ Bowers had received his first lessons in photography from Captain Wilson-Barker on the *Worcester*. The problems it presents in the Antarctic are difficult, but in Ponting the Expedition possessed an expert. Ponting instructed several of its members, of whom the most proficient was Debenham ; of the rest he notes that ‘ Captain Scott and Bowers applied themselves to the work with extraordinary enthusiasm.’—*The Great White South*, p. 167.

My own fingers went every few moments.) We saw that there had been movement and roughly measured it as about 30 feet. (The old Ferrar Glacier is more lively than we thought.) After plotting the figures it turns out that the movement varies from 24 to 32 feet at different stakes—this in $7\frac{1}{2}$ months. This is an extremely important observation, the first made on the movement of the coastal glaciers; it is more than I expected to find, but small enough to show that the idea of comparative stagnation was correct. Bowers and I exposed a number of plates and films in the glacier which have turned out very well, auguring well for the management of the camera on the Southern Journey.

Bowers continues his account as follows:

A day or two later we were a long way down the coast when we discovered a long ice cape which looked very similar to Glacier Tongue. The Tongue had remained practically intact for 10 years. Both Shackleton and ourselves had used it for depôts, as we considered it permanent, and we found the remains of S.'s dépôt there on our arrival. The Ship on return had placed a pony-fodder dépôt there, and on the night when the great break-up nearly fixed off Yours Truly and his companions 2 miles of the Tongue broke off and floated away westward. All the smaller ice went out to sea to join the pack, but this immense piece grounded about 60 or 70 miles away from its original berth across the strait and here we found it. I rushed up on it and sure enough there were our stakes and fodder and all after having been lost months before. Of course it is too far away to be of any use to us over there, unless the Ship can pick it up.

We went along the coast as far as Dunlop Island, and then headed back doing a certain amount of surveying and collecting rock-specimens at points. We then struck out for home doing about 12 miles the first afternoon. Two hours after we started the next day we were caught in a blizzard and had to camp at once which we did with difficulty. The following day we were still blizzed and had to lie in our bags in enforced idleness. The next day was clear enough to start but still blowing strong. We set out anyhow in the face of the wind [26th] and had a

most trying day's march. About noon it was drifting again very heavily and we camped for lunch behind a ridge of ice that gave us some shelter, starting again when it cleared a little. About 4 p.m. we were only about 8 miles from Cape Evans when high drift obscured the islands and we had to camp in double quick time. We were too late, as it was down on us before we could pitch the tent. Wind at 80 miles an hour does not take long to come up and it took the four of us over an hour to get the tent up. When it was at last fixed it was full of snow inside and we were caked in snow all over. It would have been very wet for us to sleep there in that state, but fortunately it cleared and we went on at 7 p.m., arriving at the Hut about 12.30 [1.15 a.m. Scott] having had the wind dead against us the whole way. Still we had done over 17 miles [geog.] that day which was not bad in the face of such a wind.

Scott's account of the journey is much more detailed, but he has some observations of more general interest. Of the march on the 26th—'We only got $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles when a heavy blizzard descended on us. We went on against it, the first time I have ever attempted to march into a blizzard'; of the last march, on the 28th—'The 21 statute miles which we marched in that day must be remembered amongst the most strenuous in my memory'; and of pitching the tent in the blizzard—'It was a long job getting the outer tent set, but thanks to P.O. Evans and Bowers it was done at last.' And finally—

The objects of our little journey were satisfactorily accomplished, but the greatest source of pleasure to me is to realize that I have such men as Bowers and P.O. Evans for the Southern journey. I do not think that harder men or better sledge travellers ever took the trail. Bowers is a little wonder. I realized all that he must have done for the C. Crozier party in their far severer experience.

It is clear that Scott was becoming increasingly impressed with Bowers' capabilities, not only physical but also mental. On September 10, after a full week's labour in making detailed plans for the Polar Journey, he had written, 'Every figure has been checked by Bowers, who has been an enormous help to me'; and again on October 22, a week before the start was made, he wrote, 'In the transport department . . . I find that Bowers is the only man on whom I can rely to carry out the work without mistake, with its array of figures.'

Nor is there any doubt that on the eve of the start, Bowers stood next, in Scott's estimation, only to Wilson, 'his human book of reference.'¹ This was an opinion which would be shared by every member of the Expedition, by one of whom it has been graphically expressed. In referring to the qualities necessary to promote loyalty and good fellowship in Winter Quarters throughout the long winter, Ponting has written :

Such qualities stood out most prominently in the two men who stood at Scott's right hand—Dr. Wilson and Lieut. Bowers. These two were inseparable friends. In physique they were the strangest contrast—Wilson, tall and lean, clean-cut and aquiline of feature, with thews of steel and without an ounce of superfluous flesh on his slim, athletic frame; Bowers, short and thick-set, with body and limbs as tough as teak, yet devoid of ugly knots or ridges of muscle.

Scott had proved the quality of Wilson's ability, spirit and wisdom in *Discovery* days. . . . It was this splendid man . . . on whom all leant at times. Because of the sheer force of his resolute character, his outstanding personality, and the sympathetic and selfless nature of his disposition, Uncle Bill not only stood foremost at the

¹ Evans—*South with Scott*.

right hand of the Leader of the Expedition, but was beloved by every member of it.

And so was Bowers.—No more cheery, joyful soul ever lived than he, nor any more disdainful of hardship ; the word was unknown in his vocabulary. . . . From the hour we disembarked in the South he was Scott's privy councillor in all matters relating to the important work of provisioning the various exploring parties. To Birdie's never-failing good humour and kindly nature we owed almost as much as to Uncle Bill's sagacity and tact for the smoothness of our domestic life.

The fine example set by these two in devotion to their Chief, and of their Chief's reliance on them, was one of the strongest bonds that united the enterprise.¹

It seemed to Scott on his return to Cape Evans on October 2, that all things augured better than well for the success of his enterprise. But these happy expectations were short-lived. During the last fortnight a series of mishaps occurred each of which might have been negligible singly, but they were shattering in their cumulative effect : three men out of action with major or minor injuries ; some of the few remaining ponies showing signs of weakness ; more than one dog dying of an unexplained malady ; trouble with the motors. Not an auspicious beginning to the Polar Journey, for the first stages of which—across the Barrier—he depended on transport. Temperamentally Scott was mercurial ; he had the defects of his qualities. In the face of sheer disaster, where lesser natures fail, he was great ; but petty annoyances, frustrations, delays, chafed him to exasperation. It must have been with a heavy heart that on October 10 he penned the words : ‘ It is very trying, but I am past despondency. Things must take their course.’

¹ Ponting—*The Great White South*, pp. 160-1.

In the midst of these worrying preoccupations he found time to write, among other letters, greetings of good cheer and appreciation to the relatives of every man under his command, and thus he wrote to Mrs. Bowers.

DEAR MRS. BOWERS,

I must send you a line on the eve of our departure for the South to tell you how fortunate I consider myself in having secured the services of your son for this Expedition. He is just splendid ; no praise from me could do him justice.

He has taken to sledge work like a duck to water and is counted amongst the hardest and best of our travellers. But in addition to a fine physique and splendid constitution he has excellent mental capacity, and this has been of the greatest possible use to me. He will probably tell you of his many activities and of the interest he takes in his work, but he will be too modest to tell you how highly his efforts are appreciated and how much they have gone to help forward the work of the Expedition. I have learnt to place the greatest reliance in all that he does and as a consequence my own work has been made a great deal easier and lighter.

Added to an unfailing energy he has a great deal of tact and discretion and he is immensely popular with everyone.

I owe him a great debt of gratitude and hope to help him forward when our present work is accomplished.

He has such a happy knack of coming through difficulties with a smiling face that I haven't any doubt he will be as flourishing in health and spirits when you see him next as he is whilst I write. Meanwhile I know you will be pleased to have a good account of him and proud to think that his merits have won him so high a place in our esteem and regard.

With kind regards,
Yours sincerely,

R. SCOTT.

In a letter to his wife a few days later Scott's appreciation is still more enthusiastically expressed.

Bowers is all and more than I ever expected of him. He is a positive treasure, absolutely trustworthy and prodigiously energetic. He is about the hardest man amongst us, and that is saying a good deal—nothing seems to hurt his tough little body and certainly no hardship daunts his spirit. I shall have a hundred little tales to tell you of his indefatigable zeal, his unselfishness, and his inextinguishable good humour. He surprises always, for his intelligence is of quite a high order and his memory for details most exceptional. You can imagine him, as he is, an indispensable assistant to me in every detail concerning the management and organization of our sledging work and a delightful companion on the march.

On his return to the Antarctic with the relief ship in March 1912 Commander Pennell wrote a long letter to Mrs. Bowers with the purpose of allaying any fears she might have since receiving the news of the desperate plight of the Last Supporting Party (Lieutenant Evans with Lashly and Crean), and of her son's selection for the Polar Party and the consequent lack of further news as to his safety. By a pathetic coincidence the letter is dated March 30. After detailing the reasons for Scott's late start and the impossibility of his returning from the Pole in time to catch the ship before it proceeded north again, he continues :

When the last party left them they were all in good health and splendid condition and had ample food. . . . You may have heard from Captain Scott himself before he left Winter Quarters, but if not I can assure you that your son has been the heart and soul of the work. His extraordinary capability came to light at once before the ship left the West India Docks, and since then he has been relied on by all in a variety of things quite outside his own commissariat department. The fact of his being

in the advance Southern Party simply shows that his physical qualities are on a par with his mental, for the party was chosen on merit. Of all the members in the expedition who so envied him his position in that party there is not one who grudges it him, or who has not acknowledged his choice as being the most suitable. . . .

Some extracts from Bowers' own last home-letters reveal the spirit in which he went out to the unknown South.

May God give us what we are striving for, we will do all that man can do, but one realizes more than ever down here how very much man is limited, and how small a thing can upset his best-laid plans. We are going forward knowing what we have got to face, and I for one am sure that the journey will be no school-boys' picnic, but as hard as any that have ever been and that the Pole will not be gained without a terrible struggle. . . .

It is a good thing to have men like Captain Scott and Dr. Wilson with us. I cannot say too much of Scott as a leader and as an extraordinarily clever and far-seeing man. Uncle Bill is as ever my beau-ideal of an English gentleman, and I feel it an honour to have been asked to accompany him on the Cape Crozier Journey. If man can make for success we have the right stuff with us. . . .

Well, if we only succeed it will be a happy return indeed, and you may be sure I shall consider no sacrifice too great for the main object, and whether I am in one of the early returning parties or not—I am Captain Scott's man and shall stick by him right through. God knows what the result will be, but we will do all that man can do and leave the rest in His keeping in which we all are, and shall remain.

In all the stress of final preparations for departure he had little left to say by way of more personal farewell. But a letter that he had previously written from New Zealand, just before the ship sailed South, may be taken as equally expressive

of his inmost thoughts as he set forth on his last journey.

MY OWN DEAREST MOTHER,

. . . My aims and objects in going into dangers and difficulties are well known to you. They are not for self-advancement or anything sordid as you know. The chief thing that impels is the indefinable call that is as unexplainable as it is insistent. It cannot be otherwise and was foreknown from the beginning. Your son is one of the few in this prosaic age who can have the privilege of realizing what must have been a commoner thing when the world was younger.

Anyhow I go from here to-day with a joyful heart that nothing on earth could take away, trusting in my heavenly Father—our Father—who will lead me and keep me till we meet again. If it is His will for me to slip over the narrow border which is so close to us daily, you will know that in this narrow spell of time it will be soon, very soon, when we shall meet in the joyful to-morrow when He shall wipe away all tears from our eyes. . . . In His keeping I say 'Good-bye,' leaving you in His care. I go South with no other earthly affection greater and dearer than to yourself.

Your ever loving son, HENRY.

CHAPTER XVII

The Polar Journey

Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a Heaven for?

BROWNING.

SCOTT'S *Last Expedition*, Volume I, is Scott's own diary verbatim and unrevised from the send-off in New Zealand to the last camp on the Great Ice Barrier. In the tale it has to tell, and in the telling of it no less, it is one of the noblest memorials in our language. We feel the impact of a mind of great practical strength, real administrative genius, capable too of keen feeling and of deep thinking. His style matches his theme: it is always intellectually distinguished, not only in his fine reflective or descriptive passages but in every unpremeditated sentence even it has a ring, like a clear bell. His eyes are always on the future, balancing time against distance and every other conceivable factor: present events—the weather, surfaces, condition of his men, as also of animals, sledges, equipment—are noted only to be considered in reference to their bearing on ultimate issues; details are duly recorded, but dwelt upon only in so far as they will affect the general plan of campaign. And if a note of anxiety creeps into it, it is the anxiety of a far-sighted and courageous

leader, responsible to his country and his comrades for success and safety ; if sometimes of petulance, it is of a kind that is surely excusable in the face of such misfortune so wholly undeserved.

An Appendix to this volume contains several extracts from Wilson's diary which are intended to be read as supplementary to Scott's, but with the publication of *The Worst Journey in the World* ten years later many others of additional value came to light. The author's own observation on Wilson's diary is :

His diary is that of an artist, watching the clouds and mountains, of a scientist observing ice and rock and snow, of a doctor, and above all of a man with good judgment. You will understand that the thing which really interested him on this journey was the acquisition of knowledge. It is a restrained, and for the most part a simple record of facts. There is seldom any comment, and where there is you feel that, for this very reason, it carries more weight.

To this it may perhaps be added that this diary is unique in the tone of its marvellous tranquillity, serenity, and even of happiness in circumstances of distress, as of a spirit detached from, or inwardly impervious to, adversity. It continues to February 27—a time of crisis—when it ceases on an optimistic note.

The Worst Journey also included the greater part of Bowers' diary, which was till then unpublished, and the author by quoting extensively from it, alongside extracts from Scott's and Wilson's diaries, has enabled the reader to make a very interesting comparison. Bowers' diary—which continues (with some breaks) to January 29—is much the most detailed of the three. It also bears the unmistakable

hall-mark of the character of its writer. It is concerned with present events for their own sake, present emergencies and how best to meet them—tactics rather than strategy. ‘Scott believed that difficulties were made to be overcome; Bowers certainly believed that he was the man to overcome them’ (Cherry-Garrard). It also reveals—and this applies to all he wrote in the Antarctic—a rapid development in the power of descriptive writing, surprising in a man of his eminently practical turn of mind.

OUT ACROSS THE GREAT ICE BARRIER.

Nov. 1–Dec. 9

The two motors had preceded the pony- and dog-teams by nine days to await their arrival at the Upper Barrier Dépôt in 80° 32', but it was three weeks before the latter, cursed with bad conditions of travel, came up with them. They started on November 1, the pony-party of ten being strung out into three sections of unequal speed, and timed for starting each day so as to finish the march together. The fastest ponies brought up the rear under Oates' superintendence, and Bowers with his pony Victor was in this section. His diary for this stage of the journey bears witness to the exertions of man and beast through unusually thick weather and upon difficult surfaces: ‘if it was only ourselves to consider I should not mind a bit, but to see our best ponies being hit like this at the start is most distressing. . . .’

The following brief extracts from Bowers' diary are chosen as typical in description of the weather experienced during the Barrier marches. Bad as it

was, however, it was as nothing to what followed. As he rightly guessed, and as subsequent investigation proved, this weather was abnormal in its severity and was confined to the particular section of the Barrier they were traversing.

Nov. 10th. I can't understand whether we are at the seat of a blizzard formation or not. It continues to show all the most threatening signs, but wind remains at (force) 5 to 6.

11th. The summer should be surely setting in soon, and as it only lasts for 2 months out of the 12 in this region I do trust it will be kind to us at this most critical time. . . . The clouds came down on us like a blanket.

12th. A moderate to fresh E.N.E. breeze. I have never known of a wind from this quarter here; it is like a continual semi-blizzard from an unheard-of direction. The persistence of this bad weather is extraordinary. . . . It seems as if nothing but a terrible blizzard will clear away this pall of heavy cloud which seems to accumulate incessantly.

13th. The weather was about as poisonous as one could wish; a fresh breeze and driving snow from the E. with an awful surface. . . . I have never seen such snow down here before—large soft flakes; it makes the surface very bad for the sledges.

14th. Weather a trifle more propitious though still thick around the horizon and fuzzy. The going still deep and heavy.

On the 15th they reached One Ton Dépôt and Bowers dug out the gear and provisions from deep drifts. He found that the thermometer which he had placed there on the Dépôt Journey recorded a minimum of -72° .

17th. A splendid parhelia exhibition was caused by the ice crystals. Round the sun was 22° halo, with four mock suns in rainbow, and outside this another halo in complete rainbow colours: above the sun were the arcs

of two other circles touching these haloes, and the arcs of the great all-round circle could be seen faintly on either side. Below was a dome-shaped glare of white which contained an exaggerated mock sun as dazzling as the sun itself.

22nd. The weather continues warm and fine, thank God; may we be granted the weather one would reasonably expect at this time of year, even in this most desolate and inclement region. The welfare of the animals is a continual worry to me, though everybody seems to imagine that I am the ultra-optimist of the party. Certainly it worries Captain Scott.

23rd. The weather looks disturbed and threatening, though the barometer is exceptionally high. . . . Wearing goggles has absolutely prevented any recurrence of snow blindness. Mine are a dark amber and suit me splendidly, they give everything a warm sunset tint. Captain Scott says they make me see everything through rose-coloured spectacles.

25th. It is gradually being borne in upon us that the surface improves with the sun upon it for sliding capacity. The greatest heat the sun can exert here makes very little difference to the mass, though it certainly improves the surface crystals which are like rasps when the low midnight sun is on them but get quite slippery when he rises higher. For that reason it would be better to march by day, but the advantage is counterbalanced by the splendid rest the ponies get during the warmest hours.

27th. The instruments consist of a sling thermometer, an aneroid and hypsometer, besides the sledgometer, and the record is a very interesting one to keep. . . . While the sun is shining we have an excellent little sundial—an idea of Captain Scott's. You set the shadow to the time and there you are—it is the simplest device imaginable and useful in many ways besides being the best thing to steer by.

28th. The weather continued wretched. It has looked as black as thunder in the south all day. . . . We have now run down a whole degree of latitude without a fine day or anything but clouds, mist, and driving snow from the south. This would worry me but little were it not for the wretched animals.

The necessity of taking ponies across the Barrier, and of driving these poor creatures to the limit of their endurance on the last day into the Gateway, before putting them out of misery with a merciful bullet, was the hardest thing these men had to bear. But—‘Any beating or undue urging is out of the question ; we have not a whip or stick in the party.’ No men could have gone to greater personal sacrifice to better their ponies’ plight than they did. In this Oates set a fine example, and Bowers, who was his self-appointed adjutant at every camp, cannot say enough in praise of the Soldier’s skill, pluck, patience and resource in dealing with them. But Bowers disagreed with his proposal to march them right through each day without a halt, and also with what seemed to him a needless economy of rations. He had such an affection for his own pony that its death-sentence, when it came at last, was a matter not only for grief but for some natural resentment.

Nov. 23. Victor, my pony, has taken to leading the line, like his opposite number last season. He is a steady goer, and as gentle as a dear old sheep. I can hardly realize the strenuous times I had with him only a month ago, when it took about four of us to get him harnessed to a sledge, and two of us every time with all our strength to keep him from bolting when in it. Even at the start of the journey he was as nearly unmanageable as any beast could be, and always liable to bolt from sheer excess of spirits. He is more sober now after three weeks of featureless Barrier, but I think I am more fond of him than ever. He has lost his rotundity, like all the other horses, and is a long-legged, angular beast, very ugly as horses go, but still I would not change him for any other.

Nov. 28. The first four miles of the march were utter misery for me, as Victor, either through lassitude or

because he did not like having to plug into the wind, went as slow as a funeral horse. The light was so bad that wearing goggles was most necessary, and the driving snow filled them up as fast as you cleared them. I dropped a long way astern of the cavalcade, could hardly see them at times through the snow, but the fear that Victor, of all the beasts, should give out was like a nightmare. I have always been used to starting later than the others by a quarter of a mile, and catching them up. At the four-mile cairn I was about fed up to the neck with it, but I said very little as everybody was so disgusted with the weather and things in general that I saw that I was not the only one in tribulation. Victor turned up trumps after that. He stepped out and led the line in his old place, and at a good swinging pace considering the surface, my temper and spirits improving at every step.

Dec. 2. Before the march Captain Scott said to me, 'I have come to a decision that will shock you.' I guessed that he had decided to shoot another pony and was not wrong. . . . Victor did a splendid march and kept ahead all day, and as usual marched into camp first, pulling over 450 lbs. easily. It seemed an awful pity to have to shoot a great strong animal, and it seemed like the irony of fate to me, as I had been downed for overprovisioning the ponies with needless excess of food, and the drastic reduction has been made against my strenuous opposition up to the last. It is poor satisfaction to me to know that I was right now that my horse is dead. Good old Victor! He has always had a biscuit out of my ration, and he ate his last before the bullet sent him to his rest. Here ends my second horse in 83° S., not quite so tragically as my first when the sea-ice broke up, but none the less I feel sorry for a beast that has been my constant companion and care for so long. He has done his share in our undertaking anyhow, and may I do my share as well when I get into harness myself.

The snow has started to fall over his bleak resting-place, and it looks like a blizzard. The outlook is dark, stormy and threatening.

That is the only trace of bitterness, if it can be called such, in the whole of his Antarctic journal.

After this Bowers went forward on ski 'nosing out the track. . . . On ski it was simply ripping, except for my inability to see anything at all.' The weather indeed, except for a few delusive gleams, was steadily going from bad to worse, till on December 6, when within a day's march of the foot of the Glacier, it culminated in a four-days' blizzard.

But these gleams had at least afforded the travelers more than one glimpse of the most majestic spectacle which the Antarctic has to disclose to those who have the courage to tempt its icy wildernesses. It broke upon them with dramatic suddenness.

Nov. 29th. Weeping may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning, at least so I thought and felt when the clouds rolled back for a short space at 2 a.m. and showed us the sight of a vast mountain chain towering high above the Barrier and looking tremendous in the bright sunlight, after 300 miles of monotonous snow plain. To add to the novelty of the sight was the fact that we had not risen the land gradually, as for the past week the weather has been thick or cloudy, and for the most part we have been walking like children of the mist, enshrouded in gloom. To our left lay Cape Wilson and the Shackleton Inlet, with the huge mountains to the south of them. Greatest of all was Mount Markham estimated by Captain Scott's survey as 15,000 feet high, and certainly the biggest mountain yet found down here. It is a wonderful sight having triple peaks scored away on one side by comb formation, which must form vast precipices. The clouds shut down again later and we did our march in semi-gloom. To come down from flights of scenic grandeur to the sordid, I must say that pony flesh is A 1. As I was cook I had taken the precaution to cut up enough of the undercut before it froze. This I dumped into the water cold with the pemmican as soon as the snow was melted. When the water came

to the boil the meat was cooked (was it? !). It *had* to be, as the allowance of oil always requires the primus to be switched off directly the article in the pot reaches boiling-point.

Dec. 1st. A glorious day at last, the first for what seems ages. Clear weather and bright sunshine without the usual wind. The land shows up in absolute magnificence, enormous mountains of glaciers, with rocks scored and valleys cut out by ice action that must date back long before God breathed into Adam the breath of life. Mount Markham is not obscured by the mountains in the foreground, and Mount Longstaff is the central feature for stupendous clump. Below it is a remarkable glacier, every detail of which could be clearly seen though it is many miles away. Even the winding moraine showed up, as well as the heavily churned up and crevassed ice-fields. It is unnamed but would make an honourable namesake for anybody. At a halt I took a panorama giving the whole range, as well as one or two of the glacier.

Dec. 4th. The wind is back to the S.E., and the blizzard from that direction. The drift came on so heavily that it was impossible to see the neighbouring tents. Our doors are now to windward, and solid columns of snow enter with each individual. . . . Wild, one of Shackleton's quartette, wrote in his diary about Dec. 15 : ' This is the first day for a month that we have not had glorious weather.' Either he must have had a phenomenally fine season or we are having an extraordinarily bad one. We are pretty cheerful on the whole. (11 p.m.) We have made a march after all. About noon it cleared again and like the rolling back of a scroll the thick snow fog cleared off and showed a tremendous mountain apparently quite close to us. We are getting some tea into us and then march again straight for Mount Hope which showed up unmistakably ahead. . . .

I cannot describe the afternoon march, for the mountains surpassed anything I have ever seen : beside the least of these giants Ben Nevis would be a mere mound, and yet they are so immense as to dwarf each other. They are intersected at every turn with mighty glaciers and icefalls and eternally ice-filled valleys that defy

description. So clear was everything that every rock stood out, and the effect of the sun as he came round was to make the scene still more beautiful. . . . We are now about 13 miles from Mount Hope. Huge undulations have been crossed all the afternoon like immense waves. They are, I should judge, from 12 to 20 feet high and nearly half a mile from crest to crest. . . . The mouth of the Glacier is quite obscured by Mount Hope, which is really an island at this corner, the Gateway being a comparatively narrow pass to the right of that—a tremendously lucky find for Shackleton, as ordinarily the junction of these glaciers with the Barrier is nothing but an inconceivable churn of immense pressure ridges, chasms and crevasses. Looking up the Gateway from here you can see the Glacier stretching away to the south, and then a bend flanked by a great mountain hides the rest. I should think by the look of it that Shackleton might reasonably have expected to have found the way through a mountain chain and on to a plain on the other side instead of a plateau. He must have been a stout-hearted fellow to have tackled such a place hitherto untrodden. The mountain seen away to the left must be in a very high latitude, 86° S. about ; from that point the journey to the Pole would be very short. If Amundsen has got there all right and found a way up he should have a much shorter summit journey than ours. In fact if he has not met with adversity he should have reached the Pole by now. I hope he has not, as I regard him as a back-handed, sneaking ruffian.

Dec. 5th. If ever an expedition came in for a dose of adverse weather it is ours. It is blowing a fierce blizzard to-day, worse than any we have had since the winter. Its peculiar feature is its warmth, which makes it all the more unpleasant. To move is utterly out of the question as it is blowing nearly a whole gale, with snow and drift that simply blind you.

Dec. 6th. When I volunteered for this Expedition I did not expect or desire a bed of roses ; I do not now, neither would I for worlds change my position with any other man on God's earth. If I seem at times to growl at what appears the most phenomenal persistence of adversity, it is because of my anxiety for the success of

our object and not for myself. I have been down to bedrock in this country, brought there by the forces of Nature. I have more than once thought 'Shall I see this through?' Now I hope I pay no heed to such thoughts, as I feel in my heart of hearts that I shall!—but *how*? through what? and when? I cannot imagine. We are here in $83\frac{1}{4}^{\circ}$ S. on the compass of the globe, at the edge of the Great Ice Barrier; a few miles from us is the greatest glacier known to man; straight ahead is the Gateway, and a single march distant. The day before yesterday it seemed within our reach; to-day it might with the Glacier and mountains and all be at the North Pole for all we can see, hear or tell.

It is blowing a blizzard such as one might expect to be driven at us by all the powers of darkness. It may be interesting to describe it, as it is my first experience of a really warm blizzard, and I hope to be troubled by cold ones only, or at least moderate ones only, in future as regards temperature.

When I swung the thermometer this morning I looked and looked again, but unmistakably the temperature was $+33^{\circ}$ F., above freezing-point (out of the sun's direct rays) for the first time since we came down here. What this means to us nobody can conceive. We try to treat it as a huge joke, but our wretched condition might be amusing to read of later. We are wet through, our tents are wet, our bags which are our life to us and the objects of our greatest care, are wet; the poor ponies are soaked and shivering far more than they would be ordinarily in a temperature fifty degrees lower. Our sledges—the parts that are dug out—are wet, our food is wet, everything on and around and about us is the same—wet as ourselves and our cold, clammy clothes. Water trickles down the tent poles and only forms icicles in contact with the snow floor. The warmth of our bodies has formed a snow bath in the floor for each of us to lie in. This is a nice little catchwater for stray streams to run into before they freeze. This they cannot do while a warm human lies there, so they remain liquid and the accommodating bag mops them up. When we go out to do the duties of life, fill the cooker, etc., for the next meal, dig out or feed the ponies, or anything else, we are

bunged up with snow. Not the driving, sandlike snow we are used to, but great slushy flakes that run down in water immediately and stream off you. The drifts are tremendous, the rest of the show is indescribable. I feel most for the unfortunate animals and am thankful that poor old Victor is spared this. I mended a pair of half mitts to-day, and we are having two meals instead of three. This idleness when one is simply jumping to go on is bad enough for most, but must be worse for Captain Scott. I feel glad that he has Dr. Bill (Wilson) in his tent; there is something always so reassuring about Bill, he comes out best in adversity.

Dec. 7th. As bad as ever; it cannot be much worse. I had to dig out a new lot of rations to-day, as we start on our Summit scale. We were hoping to be two days up the Glacier before we did so, but that is past regret. There is no change in the weather, but a hopeful rise in the barometer. What summer weather we are having for our show! We are pressed in on every side by the weights of snow at which we have dug away in vain. I am glad I am not a long person, as even I cannot lie quite straight. We are all wet, soaking and wringing wet bags, clothes and gear—a snipe marsh we call it—and being tightly packed together we are warm in spite of all. Still we are all in the same boat, none of us is more wet than the next man, and I can endure what any other man can! That is my creed down here—if any voice is raised in protest it shall not be mine. Still, I shall not cease to pray for a cessation of what appears to me excessive adversity.

8th. We dug the ponies out of the great drifts again—poor wet, sodden, miserable creatures; it would seem that the devil himself could hardly have beset us more than this fiendish weather. After hours of digging we extracted our saturated equipment. The next thing was to shift tents. We found all the valances encased in solid ice, and the pits thawed out by our bodies had lowered the floors a lot, they looked like round trenches. However, we are not done yet by a long way. . . . The steady patter of the falling snow on the tents is very depressing, but I refuse to think other than the bright side, though I may set down all my feelings in this journal.

It is instructive to compare this description with Scott's, and to note his surmise—so much truer even than he guessed :

There is food for thought in picturing our small party struggling against adversity in one place whilst others go smilingly forward in the sunshine. How great may be the element of luck ! No foresight—no procedure—could have prepared us for this state of affairs. Had we been ten times as experienced or certain of our aim we should not have expected such rebuffs.

At last, on the fifth day, they found it possible to move and struck camp ; Bowers and Cherry-Garrard, leading with a short sledge to make a track through the chasm, succeeded in hitting off the only negotiable entrance to the pass.

And so they plugged on knee-deep in slush to ' Shambles Camp ' at the foot of the Glacier, where the last of the worn-out ponies were mercifully killed. Thus ended the first stage of their journey.

THE ASCENT OF THE BEARDMORE GLACIER.

Dec. 10-22

It is impossible to overestimate Bowers' value to the Expedition on the Polar Journey. Not only was he meteorologist, observer, navigator, but he had been responsible for the calculation of all weights and for the provisioning and arrangement of the depôts, a task entailing frequent revision and consultation with Scott, Oates and Meares respecting rationing of men, ponies and dogs. And he never made a mistake.

The party man-hauled the sledges up the Glacier in three teams, the first of which comprised four of the five men subsequently selected for the Pole, the last of which was led by Bowers. Though they

had hoped for the hard blue ice with which Shackleton's party had been favoured, the snow lay as soft and deep on the lower reaches of the Glacier as on the Barrier, and by this time half the party were stricken with snow-blindness.

Dec. 10. I am afraid I am going to pay dearly for not wearing goggles yesterday when piloting the ponies. My right eye has gone bung, and my left one is pretty dicky. If I am in for a dose of snow glare it will take three or four days to leave me, and I am afraid I am in the ditch this time. It is painful to look at this paper, and my eyes are fairly burning as if some one had thrown sand into them.

14th. I have missed my journal for four days, having been enduring the pains of hell with my eyes as well as doing the most back-breaking work I have ever come up against.

It was all we could do to keep the sledge moving for short spells of a few hundred yards, the whole concern sinking so deeply into the soft snow as to form a snow-plough. The starting was worse than pulling as it required from ten to fifteen desperate jerks on the harness to move the sledge at all. . . . The sledges sank in over twelve inches, and all the gear, as well as the thwartship pieces, were acting as brakes. The tugs and heaves we enjoyed, and the number of times we had to get out of our ski to upright the sledge, were trifles compared with the strenuous exertion of every muscle and nerve to keep the wretched drag from stopping when once under weigh; and then it would stick, and all the starting operations had to be gone through afresh. We did perhaps half a mile in the forenoon. . . .

We stuck ten yards from the camp, and nine hours later found us little more than half a mile on. I have never seen a sledge sink so. I have never pulled so hard, or so nearly crushed my inside into my backbone by the everlasting jerking with all my strength on the canvas band round my unfortunate tummy. We were all in the same boat however.

No abatement of these conditions occurred till, after excessive toil, they were half-way up the

Glacier. But on the 17th, below Cloudmaker, they came upon huge ice-pressure waves with snow-filled hollows, and tobogganed the sledges down the slopes, being carried by the impetus some way up the next, and hauling to the top of the crest at standing pulls.

We aimed towards the Cloudmaker at first and were soon amongst tremendous pressure ridges. Captain Scott led : we had the greatest fun in our lives. Many waves had to be crossed, some diagonally, some straight across and along, some we ran parallel with. There were innumerable crevasses but mostly well bridged ; I stuck my feet into a few dozen during the day. Crossing the waves was great sport ; it was just like the scenic railway. You poised the sledge on a giddy height, aimed her carefully, all four men braking with their feet, and then a shove and down you would fly, often faster than any switchback. Sometimes when the slope was straight and smooth we could all jump on and let her rip. A broken sledge, however, would be a most serious matter, and it needed much care. As an offset against these delightful rushes we had hours of dragging uphill across snow-filled slopes and hollows that made lifting the feet a labour. We often had to face the sledges and manhaul them inch by inch. However, all these were forgotten in one good rush down. Clearing the worst of the waves we followed the back of a long ridge for over an hour, mostly on hard blue ice, and it was a treat after the plodding in soft snow.

Then as the Glacier widened out towards the summit large fields of ice appeared : ‘ a hard rippled blue surface like a sea frozen intact while the wind was playing on it.’ Bowers had lost many hours’ sleep in his efforts to repair his sledge-meter which one of the ponies had damaged ; but it was lost labour when the registering dial shook loose on this rippled surface. Wilson and he went back in the track to find it, but without result.

Scott showed his skill as a pilot in the heavily crevassed area of the Upper Glacier :

He avoids the sides of the glacier and goes nowhere near the snow : he often heads straight for apparent chaos and somehow, when we appear to have reached a cul-de-sac, we find an open road. . . . Scott is quite wonderful in his selections of route, as we have escaped excessive dangers and difficulties all along. (*21st.*) We got into a perfect mass of crevasses into which we all continually fell—occasionally we went down all together, some to the length of their harness and had to be hauled out with the alpine rope. (I have never yet been down to the full length of mine, as I did on the Winter Journey.) They were often too wide to jump, and the only thing to do was to plant your foot on the bridge and try not to tread heavily. It is a bit of a jar when it gives way under you, but the friendly harness is made to trust one's life to. The Lord only knows how deep these vast chasms go down, they seem to extend into blue black nothingness. Before reaching the rise we had to go up and down many steep slopes, and on the one hand the sledges were overrunning us and on the other it fairly took the juice out of you to reach the top. We saw the stratification on the nunakak which Shackleton supposed to be coal. There was also much sandstone and red granite : I should like to have scratched round these rocks—we may get a chance on our return journey. . . . I worked up to a very late hour getting the *Depôt* stores ready and also weighing out and arranging allowances for the returning party, and arranging the stores and distribution of weights for the two parties going on.

At the Summit on Midsummer's Day he made their Upper Glacier *Depôt* and bade farewell to the Returning Party—Atkinson, Cherry-Garrard, Wright, and seaman Keohane :

It was quite touching saying farewell to our good pals—they wished us luck, and Cherry, Atch, and Silas quite overwhelmed me. . . . I am sending this [his journal]

by my friend Cherry, whose going back I feel muchly, though we cannot all go on, worse luck.

ACROSS THE POLAR PLATEAU.

Dec. 22—Jan. 17

The first team continued as before, and Bowers and seaman Crean were joined by Lieutenant Evans and P.O. Lashly to form the second. The strain was already beginning to tell: 'One gets pretty weary towards the end of the day; all my muscles have had their turn at being stiffened up.' That, coming from Bowers, is significant. On Christmas Day:

A strange and strenuous Christmas for me, with plenty of snow to look at and very little else. . . . We were all falling [into crevasses] continually, but Lashly had the worst drop. He fell to the length of his harness and the trace. I was glad that having noticed his rope rather worn, I had given him a new one a few days before. . . .

That day they made a long march—15 miles, and celebrated the occasion at the end of it with a 'feast.'

We have had a great feed which I had kept hidden and out of the official weights since our departure from Winter Quarters. It consisted of a good fat hoosh with pony meat and ground biscuit. A chocolate hoosh made of water, cocoa, sugar, biscuit, raisins, and thickened with a spoonful of arrowroot. Then came 2½ square inches of plum duff each, and a good mug of cocoa washed down the whole. In addition to this we had 4 caramels each and 4 squares of crystallized ginger. I positively could not eat all mine, and turned in feeling as if I had made a beast of myself. I wrote up my journal, and should have liked somebody to put me to bed.

Scott wrote next day, 'We have all slept splendidly and feel thoroughly warm—such is the effect of full feeding.' Lieutenant Evans, in his book, *South with*

Scott, has a happy reminiscence of that night : 'After the others in my tent were asleep, little Birdie Bowers, bidding me "Good-night," said, "Teddy, if all is well next Christmas we will get hold of all the poor children we can and just stuff them full of nice things, won't we?"' It was, as he says, unthinkable then that five out of the eight were so soon to forfeit their lives by a series of crushing defeats brought about by Nature.

And now the irrevocable decision must be made who these five should be. *Scott* had intended a four-man party and his decision had probably for several days been hardening in favour of his own team, which was pulling with increasing steadiness up the gradual rise of the Plateau. If any doubt had crossed his mind, it was of his own fitness, since he was subject to indigestion ; and of *Oates*, who was less experienced as a 'foot-slogging' traveller than the rest. But of himself he could now write, 'I am exceedingly fit, and can go with the best of them' ; and of *Oates*, 'he goes hard the whole time, does his share of camp work, and stands the hardship as well as any of us.' Things seemed at this stage in all respects so satisfactory that at the last moment he decided on a five-man party. This was a risk in both directions ; it over-staffed the Polar Party, and under-staffed the Returning Party. But it seemed at the time worth taking, since the fifth man was Bowers, even though it meant extra exertion for him—shorter than his companions and temporarily without ski.

It is easy to be wise after the event. Four men to each party would doubtless have been better than five and three. Of the five chosen *Scott* was

certainly right in his choice of himself and Wilson and Bowers, but it may now be doubted whether P.O. Evans, in spite of his great physical strength, was either temperamentally or constitutionally fitted for a test of such immense endurance. Oates had been feeling the effects of a war-wound (which Scott did not know), and he was not an expert in any technical branch of manhauling sledges as each of the others were, and so lacked a special interest. Cherry-Garrard, in another connection, has written : ' If Scott had only taken a four-man party and Lashly to the Pole ! '

The Last Returning Party—Lieutenant Evans with Lashly and Crean—went back on their eventful and perilous home-journey on January 4.

Bowers' diary for this day, January 4,¹ contains two remarks personal to himself.

After so little sleep the previous night I rather dreaded the march.—It is a long slog with a well-loaded sledge, and more tiring for me than the others, as I have no ski. However, as long as I can do my share all day and keep fit it does not matter much one way or the other.

But Scott's diary has frequent reference to this extra fatigue which Bowers not only endured but even welcomed. From now on he pulled on foot between his companions who were on ski, and he also became responsible for taking and recording angles and observations in camp, a task involving late nights.²

¹ His diary was not resumed till January 19.

² Sir George Simpson writes : ' Bowers kept the meteorological log of the Main Party on the Polar Journey. It starts near Cape Evans on November 3rd, 1911, and continues with three observations a day without a break until the lunch camp on March 5. The log is an almost perfect meteorological record, the instrument reading carefully taken and the eye

[From Scott's *Journal*.]

Jan. 8.—Little Bowers remains a marvel—he is thoroughly enjoying himself. I leave all the provision arrangement in his hands, and at all times he knows exactly how we stand, or how each returning party should fare. It has been a complicated business to redistribute stores at various stages of re-organization, but not one single mistake has been made. In addition to the stores, he keeps the most thorough and conscientious meteorological record, and to this he now adds the duty of observer and photographer. Nothing comes amiss to him, and no work is too hard. It is a difficulty to get him into the tent; he seems quite oblivious of the cold, and he lies coiled in his bag writing and working out sights long after the others are asleep.

Jan. 12.—Little Bowers is wonderful; in spite of my protest he would take sights after we had camped to-night, after marching in the soft snow all day where we have been comparatively restful on ski.

Jan. 13.—We should be in a poor way without our ski, though Bowers manages to struggle through the soft snow without tiring his short legs.

Jan. 15.—Little Bowers continues his indefatigable efforts to get good sights, and it is wonderful how he works them up in his sleeping-bag in our congested tent.

Jan. 16.—About the second hour of the march Bowers' sharp eyes detected what he thought was a cairn; he was uneasy about it, but argued that it must be a sastrugus. Half an hour later he detected a black speck ahead. Soon we knew that this could not be a natural snow feature. We marched on, found that it was a black flag attached to a sledge bearer. . . .

observations of wind cloud and weather accurately set down with ample and clear remarks. After March 5th the observations become irregular, but on most days there is at least one reading of the barometer and the temperature until March 10th when the temperature record ceases with the remark "Thermometer broken"; the last entry in the meteorological log is a reading of the barometer taken at the lunch camp on March 12th, just a week before they pitched their last camp.'

Jan. 17.—To-night little Bowers is laying himself out to get sights in terrible difficult circumstances ; the wind is blowing hard, T. — 21° , and there is that curious damp, cold feeling in the air which chills one to the bone in no time.

Scott's protests (disregarded) were evoked by the terribly gruelling nature of their work from the middle of the plateau to the Pole, over surfaces that made the sledge a dead weight : ice-crystals and ice-crested ripples of ribbed snow too hard to melt with the friction of the runners, and hence no glide—and this for the most part in the teeth of a searchingly cold south wind.¹ On the 14th Scott noticed that 'Oates is feeling the cold and fatigue more than the rest of us,' and a few days later, 'there is no doubt that (P.O.) Evans is badly run down.'

THE POLE.

Jan. 17-18

Bowers' diary, which as before mentioned is the most complete in the details of the events it records, has a blank from January 4 to January 19. The wonder is that, with his Meteorological Log, he kept a diary at all. But the Log has a most valuable account of the conditions which from his observations may be supposed to be normally prevalent at the Pole in summer.² And the blank is made good by three hitherto unpublished letters to his mother and sisters from the uttermost South.

South Pole. *17th Jan. '12.* . . . I don't suppose you ever thought that your son would be at the Apex of the

¹ The scientific reasons for these wholly unexpected reversals of fortune are set forth in *The Worst Journey in the World*, 1st Edition, Vol. II, pp. 502-5.

² *Ibid.*, p. 508.

Earth. Well, here I really am and very glad to be here too. It is a bleak spot—what a place to strive so hard to reach. I am nearer to you here than at Winter Quarters, in fact a rapid flight up the Greenwich Meridian would be my shortest way home. Now the great journey is done it only remains for us to get back. Fortunately we are all fit and well, and should with luck catch the ship in time for the news. Every day will bring me nearer to your letters. It is sad that we have been forestalled by the Norwegians, but I am glad that we have done it by good British manhaulage. That is the traditional British sledging method and this is the greatest journey done by man since we left our transport at the foot of the Glacier. We have now nearly 800 miles (geog.) to tramp back with our sledge. I could not have better companions—we are a most congenial party and five is a pleasant little crowd when one is so far from home. Dearest love. Your ever loving son, HENRY.

18 Jan. '12. . . . We have fixed the exact spot of the South Pole to-day and left the British flag there. I have had the honour to be the observer, in fact I have navigated the party here and done all observations since Teddy Evans returned. Amundsen's people left a tent with some of their discarded gear close to the pole. They were here exactly a month ago. I am awfully sorry for Capt. Scott who has taken the blow very well indeed. . . . I was very glad too of a pair of their reindeer mits, having lost my own dogskins some days back. We now head for home and all it means—news from my own home is my first thought—then news from the outer world—to see everybody we left in the good old ship again, and last but not least the fleshly considerations of unlimited rest and food. You will be glad to hear I have been to this spot I am sure. . . .

18 Jan. '12. . . . Though our strenuous life admits only of every moment in the bag being spent in sleep I can still find time to send a line to those who are most in my thoughts. . . . I am glad to say I am fit and strong after having walked for 380 miles with a pony and pulled a heavy sledge for 400 miles more, chiefly at an altitude of 10,000 feet. Of course none of us are as strong as we were, and one feels inexpressibly weary at

the end of a long march if the surface has been heavy. A good meal and a night's rest, however, and you are as fit as ever. Our ration is an excellent one, but we could all eat far more needless to say, 34 ozs. a day is however enough for us to work well on. . . . Well, we have got here, and if ever a journey has been accomplished by honest sweat ours has. . . .

They exposed ten films at the Pole in a temperature of -21° with a strong wind blowing: 'mighty cold work all of it,' wrote Scott. The method was to fix the camera in the snow, focus the lens on the group, and tie a cord to the catch of the shutter. In the majority of these either Wilson or Bowers is seen in the act of pulling the cord, in one P.O. Evans. Of the rest Bowers was himself photographer. Nearly a year later these films, found with their bodies in the tent, were developed at Cape Evans. All make good photographs and several can bear enlargement. The party as a whole look fit, although their faces (except Wilson's) are scarred with frostbite, and P.O. Evans' looks somewhat drawn.

BACK ACROSS THE POLAR PLATEAU.

Jan. 19-Feb. 7

For the first week Bowers kept a full diary which speaks for itself. Only the briefest extracts from it can be given here.

January 19. A splendid clear morning with a fine S.W. wind blowing. During breakfast time I sewed a flap attachment on to the hood of my green hat so as to prevent the wind from blowing down my neck on the march. We got up the mast and sail on the sledge and headed north, picking up Amundsen's cairn and our outgoing tracks shortly afterwards. . . .

In the afternoon we passed No. 2 cairn of the British route, and fairly slithered along before a fresh breeze.

It was heavy travelling for me, not being on ski, but one does not mind being tired if a good march is made. . . .

January 20. Good sailing breeze again this morning. It is a great pleasure to have one's back to the wind instead of having to face it. It came on thicker later, but we sighted the Last Dépôt soon after 1 p.m. and reached it at 1.45 p.m. The red flag on the bamboo pole was blowing out merrily to welcome us back from the Pole, with its supply of necessities of life below. We are absolutely dependent upon our dépôts to get off the plateau alive, and so welcome the lonely little cairns gladly. . . . The bamboo was bent on to the floor-cloth as a yard for our sail instead of a broken sledge-runner of Amundsen's which we had found at the Pole and made a temporary yard of. . . .

The wind increased to a moderate gale with heavy gusts and considerable drift. We should have had a bad time had we been facing it. . . . Unfortunately the surface got very sandy latterly, but we finished up with 16.1 miles to our credit and camped in a stiff breeze, which resolved itself into a blizzard a few hours later. I was glad we had our dépôt safe.

January 21. Wind increased to force 8 during night with heavy drift. In the morning it was blizzing like blazes and marching was out of the question. The wind would have been great assistance to us, but the drift was so thick that steering a course would have been next to impossible. We decided to await developments and get under way as soon as it showed any signs of clearing. Fortunately it was shortlived, and instead of lasting the regulation two days it eased up in the afternoon, and 3.45 found us off with our sail full. It was good running on ski but soft plodding for me on foot. I shall be jolly glad to pick up my dear old ski. They are nearly 200 miles away yet, however. . . .

January 22. . . . In the afternoon the breeze fell altogether, and the surface, acted on by the sun, became perfect sawdust. The light sledge pulled by five men came along like a drag without a particle of slide or give. We were all glad to camp soon after 7 p.m. I think we were all pretty tired out. We did altogether 19.5 miles for the day. We are only thirty miles from the $1\frac{1}{2}$ Degree

Depôt, and should reach it in two marches with any luck [temperature — 30°].

January 23. Started off with a bit of a breeze which helped us a little [temperature — 28°]. After the first two hours it increased to force 4, S.S.W., and filling the sail we sped along merrily, doing 8½ miles before lunch. In the afternoon it was even stronger, and I had to go back on the sledge and act as guide and brakesman. We had to lower the sail a bit, but even then she ran like a bird.

We are picking up our old cairns famously. . . . As we were all getting pretty cold latterly we stopped at a quarter to seven, having done 16½ miles. We camped with considerable difficulty owing to the force of the wind. [Scott wrote : ‘I think Wilson, Bowers and I are as fit as possible under the circumstances.’]

January 24. . . . It was blowing a gale when we started and it increased in force. Finally with the sail half down, one man detached tracking ahead and Titus and I breaking back, we could not always keep the sledge from overrunning. The blizzard got worse and worse till, having done only seven miles, we had to camp soon after twelve o’clock. We had a most difficult job camping, and it has been blowing like blazes all the afternoon. I think it is moderating now, 9 p.m. We are only seven miles from our depôt and this delay is exasperating.

[Scott wrote : ‘This is the second full gale since we left the Pole. I don’t like the look of it. Is the weather breaking up? If so, God help us, with the tremendous summit journey and scant food. Wilson and Bowers are my stand-by. I don’t like the easy way in which Oates and Evans get frost-bitten.’]

January 25. It was no use turning out at our usual time (5.45 a.m.), as the blizzard was as furious as ever ; we therefore decided on a late breakfast and no lunch unless able to march. . . .

Our bags are getting steadily wetter, so are our clothes. It shows a tendency to clear off now (breakfast time) so, D.V., we may march after all. I am in tribulation as regards meals now as we have run out of salt, one of my favourite commodities.

In the afternoon we did 5.2 miles. It was a miserable march, blizzard all the time and our sledge either sticking

in sastrugi or overrunning the traces. We had to lower the sail half down, and Titus and I hung on to her. It was most strenuous work, as well as much colder than pulling ahead. Most of the time we had to brake back with all our strength to keep the sledge from overrunning. Bill got a bad go of snow glare from following the track without goggles on.

This day last year we started the Dépôt Journey. I did not think so short a time would turn me into an old hand at polar travelling, neither did I imagine at the time that I would be returning from the Pole itself.

[Scott wrote: 'Bowers got another rating sight to-night—it was wonderful how he managed to observe in such a horribly cold wind.']

January 26–28. No entry.

January 29. . . . Our record march to-day. With a good breeze and improving surface we were soon in among the double tracks where the supporting party left us. Then we picked up the memorable camp where I transferred to the advance party. How glad I was to change over. . . . I was braking back on sledge and controlling; it was beastly cold and my hands were perished. . . . A stiff breeze with drift continues: temperature — 25°. Thank God our days of having to face it are over. We completed 19.5 miles [22 statute] this evening, and so are only 29 miles from our precious [Three Degree] Dépôt. It will be bad luck indeed if we do not get there in a march and a half anyhow.

This, save for a few fragmentary notes—the last dated 'Feb. 3 (I suppose)'—is the end of Bowers' diary. On January 31 he had picked up his ski, having trudged 360 miles (geog.) on foot. From about this date also weather and surface conditions were improving on the whole and the miles came faster; but from now on hunger and cold were telling on them more and more. Scott must have known that the situation was becoming serious even before they reached the Glacier summit and commenced the descent—Wilson with a severely hurt

leg, Scott with a bruised shoulder, Oates with a foot numbed with cold, Evans steadily going from bad to worse—but ‘Bowers is splendid, full of energy and bustle all the time.’ And before they reached the Glacier they spent a whole day extricating themselves from a maze of crevasses.

THE DESCENT OF THE BEARDMORE GLACIER.

Feb. 8-17

Off the Summit at last with its featureless white waste, low temperatures and biting and incessant wind, they were glad of the respite of the bare mountain-tops, Mts. Darwin and Buckley, the latter standing up like an island out of the ice, and here Wilson and Bowers went off when they camped to collect the 35 lbs. weight of rock-specimens which were loaded up and carried to the end. These included quartzite, iron pyrites, coal and fossil plants. A few days later they were both stricken with severe bouts of snow-blindness, as a result of track-searching without goggles. A low haze obscured landmarks and rendered the track deceptive: the track was in and among and across crevasses and ice-falls and disturbances whose presence and direction must often be guessed. Many times they lost their way, and much precious time. They felt themselves to be weakening, knew they were behind the margin of safety as to time and distance, necessarily went short of food and sleep. Scott’s diary does not conceal his anxiety. ‘The worst day we have had during this trip.’—‘We must either march blindly on or reduce food.’—‘There were times when it seemed impossible to find a way out. . . . It was very heavy work but

we had grown desperate.’—‘We are in a very critical situation.’—‘Yesterday was the worst experience of our trip.’—‘There is no getting away from the fact that we are not going strong.’—‘We have reduced food, also sleep ; feeling rather done.’

They got through somehow, and then at the foot of the Glacier, soon after starting to march on February 17, Evans collapsed in the track. They camped, and tended him all that day—‘even when the safety of the remainder seemed to demand his abandonment.’ But he died at midnight without having recovered consciousness.

THE GREAT ICE BARRIER.

Feb. 18–March 29

They were all strong men, these four ; but the terrible strain, both mental and physical, which they had already endured, culminating in the shock of this tragedy, must have shaken them as they set out on the last lap of their journey. Yet in spite of it they were justified in believing that the odds were still in their favour. Once on the Barrier again—with the rarified air of the Plateau, its cruel surfaces and pitilessly piercing winds left behind them, and the tortuous horror of the Glacier well forgotten, and with the addition of pony-meat now to their scanty rations—they were justified in hoping for better things. But though ‘we have fought these untoward events with a will and conquered,’ these events ‘were nothing to the surprise that awaited us on the Barrier.’ Instead of a rise in temperature—cold of ever-increasing severity ; instead of a glide to the runners—a surface like desert sand ; instead of an access of strength from in-

creased rations—only increasing debility ; instead of warmth in the tent when they most needed it, and hot food—a shortage of fuel at the Mid Barrier Depôt ; and finally the gradual weakening and loss of another companion. Yet they would even then have won through, those three, but for the fatal last blow which fortune dealt them when they were within an ace of safety.¹

There can be few diaries written in icy extremity more moving than Scott's in these last marches ; no letters of farewell more finely touched with the spirit in which to die.

Feb. 21. We never won a march of $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles with greater difficulty, but we can't go on like this.

Feb. 23. Luckily Bowers took a round of angles and with the help of the chart we fogged out that we must be inside rather than outside tracks. The data were so meagre that it seemed a great responsibility to march out and we were none of us happy about it. But just as we decided to lunch, Bowers' wonderful sharp eyes detected an old double lunch cairn, the theodolite telescope confirmed it, and our spirits rose accordingly.

Feb. 25. The pulling is still *very* hard . . . is tiring us, though we are getting into better ski drawing again. Bowers hasn't quite the trick and is a little hurt at my criticisms, but I never doubted his heart.

March 4. I don't know what I should do if Wilson and Bowers weren't so determinedly cheerful over things.

March 5. We mean to see the game through with a proper spirit, but it's tough work to be pulling harder than we ever pulled in our lives for long hours, and to feel that the progress is so slow. One can only say ' God

¹ A scientific description of the weather conditions throughout the Polar Journey, culminating in the blizzard—which is known to have continued for ten days at least and probably longer—is set forth in the Halley Lecture for 1923 by Sir George Simpson, now Director of the Meteorological Office.

help us !' and plod on our weary way, cold and very miserable, though outwardly cheerful.

March 6. Poor Oates is unable to pull, sits on the sledge when we are track-searching—he is wonderfully plucky, as his feet must be giving him great pain. He makes no complaint, but his spirits only come up in spurts now, and he grows more silent in the tent.

March 8. Wilson's feet giving trouble now, but this mainly because he gives so much help to others.

March 14. Poor Wilson horribly cold, could not get off ski for some time. Bowers and I practically made camp, and when we got into the tent at last we were all deadly cold. . . . No idea there could be temperatures like this at this time of year [-43° at midday] with such winds. Truly awful outside the tent. Must fight it out to the last biscuit, but can't reduce rations.

Friday, March 16 or Saturday 17. Lost track of dates but think the last correct. Tragedy all along the line. . . . He [Oates] has borne intense suffering for weeks without complaint, and to the very last was able and willing to discuss outside subjects. He did not—would not—give up hope to the very end. . . . He went out into the blizzard and we have not seen him since. . . . The cold is intense, -40° at midday. My companions are unendingly cheerful—and though we constantly talk of fetching through I don't think any one of us believes it in his heart.

March 18. My right foot has gone, nearly all the toes—two days ago I was proud possessor of best feet. . . . Bowers takes first place in condition, but there is not much to choose after all. The others are still confident of getting through—or pretend to be—I don't know !

March 21. Got within 11 miles of depôt Monday night, had to lay up all yesterday in severe blizzard. To-day forlorn hope, Wilson and Bowers going to depôt for fuel.

March 22 and 23. Blizzard as bad as ever—Wilson and Bowers unable to start—to-morrow last chance—no fuel and only one or two of food left—must be near the end. Have decided it shall be natural.

From Letters. We have done everything possible, even to sacrificing ourselves in order to save sick companions. . . .

No fuel and a long way from food, but it would do your heart good to be in our tent, to hear our songs and the cheery conversation. . . .

We are very near the end, but have not and will not lose our good cheer. . . .

From Last Message. We are weak, writing is difficult, but for my own sake I do not regret this journey, which has shown that Englishmen can endure hardships, help one another, and meet death with as great a fortitude as ever in the past. . . . Had we lived, I should have had a tale to tell of the hardihood, endurance, and courage of my companions which would have stirred the heart of every Englishman. . . .

March 29. Every day we have been ready to start for our depôt 11 miles away, but outside the door of the tent it remains a scene of whirling drift. I do not think we can hope for any better things now. We shall stick it out to the end, but we are getting weaker, of course—the end cannot be far.

It seems a pity, but I do not think I can write more.

To Mrs. Bowers.

MY DEAR MRS. BOWERS,

I am afraid this will reach you after one of the heaviest blows of your life.

I write when we are very near the end of our journey, and I am finishing it in company with two gallant, noble gentlemen. One of these is your son. He had come to be one of my closest and soundest friends, and I appreciate his wonderful upright nature, his ability and energy. As the troubles have thickened his dauntless spirit ever shone brighter and he has remained cheerful, hopeful, and indomitable to the end.

The ways of providence are inscrutable, but there must be some reason why such a young, vigorous and promising life is taken.

My whole heart goes out in pity for you.

Yours,

R. SCOTT.

To the end he has talked of you and his sisters. One sees what a happy home he must have had and perhaps it is well to look back on nothing but happiness.

He remains unselfish, self-reliant and splendidly hopeful to the end, believing in God's mercy to you.

'There must be some reason why such a young, promising and vigorous life is taken.'

There must indeed, unless all goes for naught, and all that makes for worth and valour ends in oblivion.

When the long polar night was ended and the snow-buried tent was found, taut and trim as it had been pitched, Bowers lay there as if in sleep—the sleep that seems eternal. But if beyond all seeming there exists in worlds unrealized a field for heroic enterprise and high endeavour then surely he must be, as he would say himself, 'right in it.'

But the best remains to be said, and it will be said by the man who of all his comrades who are left has the most right to say it. Cherry-Garrard has written :

As he was one of the two or three greatest friends of my life I find it hard to give the reader a mental picture of Birdie Bowers which will not appear extravagant. There were times when his optimism appeared forced and formal, though I believe it was not really so ; there were times when I have almost hated him for his infernal cheerfulness. To those accustomed to judge men by the standards of their fashionable and corseted drawing-rooms Bowers appeared crude. 'You couldn't kill that man if you took a pole-axe to him,' was the comment of a New Zealander at a dance at Christchurch. Such men may be at a discount in conventional life ; but give me a snowy ice-floe waving about on the top of a black swell, a ship thrown back, a sledge-party almost shattered, or one that has just upset their supper on to the floorcloth of the tent (which is much the same thing),



BIRDIE '

H G Ponting, phot

and I will lie down and cry for Bowers to come and lead me to food and safety. . . .

There was nothing subtle about him. He was transparently simple, straightforward and unselfish. His capacity for work was prodigious, and when his own work happened to take less than his full time he characteristically found activity in serving a scientist or exercising an animal. . . . A living thing in trouble be it dog or man was something to be helped. . . .

For him difficulties simply did not exist: he was temperamentally one who refused to admit them. Indeed, if he did not actually welcome them, he greeted them with scorn, and in scorning went far to master them. . . . I have never known a more buoyant, virile nature. . . .

Those whom the gods love die young. The gods loved him, if indeed it be benevolent to show your favourites a clear, straight, shining path of life, with plenty of discomfort and not a little pain, but with few doubts and no fears. Browning might well have had Bowers in mind when he wrote of:

One who never turned his back, but marched breast
forward ;

Never doubted clouds would break ;
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would
triumph ;

Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.

BOWERS' LAST LETTER

Date uncertain, about *March 22nd, 1912.*

Blizzard Camp 11' S. of 1 Ton Dépôt.

MY OWN DEAREST MOTHER

As this may possibly be my last letter to you—I am sorry it is such a short scribble. I have written little since we left the Pole but it has not been for want of thinking of you and the dear girls. We have had a terrible journey back. Seaman Evans died in the glacier and Oates left us the other day. We have had terribly low temperatures on the Barrier and that and our sick companions have delayed us till too late in the season which has made us very short of fuel and we are now out of food as well. Each dépôt has been a harder struggle to reach but I am still strong and hope to reach this one with Dr. Wilson and get the food and fuel necessary for our lives. God alone knows what will be the outcome of the 22 miles march we have to make but my trust is still in Him and in the abounding Grace of my Lord and Saviour whom you brought me up to trust in and who has been my stay through life. In His keeping I leave you and am only glad that I am permitted to struggle on to the end. When man's extremity is reached God's help may put things right. Although the end will be painless enough for myself I should so like to come through for your dear sake. It is splendid to pass however with such companions as I have and as all five of us have mothers and wives you will not be alone. There will be no shame however and you will know that I have struggled to the end. Much and dearest love to your dear self and May and Edie.

Oh how I do feel for you when you hear all, you will know that for me the end was peaceful as it is only sleep in the cold. Your ever loving son to the end of this life and the next when God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes—

H. R. BOWERS.

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